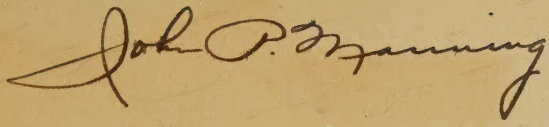
HOMILETIC SERMONETTES *ON THE* GOSPELS

REUTER



REV. JOHN P. MANNING

HOMILETIC SERMONETTES

ON THE GOSPELS

OF THE SUNDAYS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

WITH

STORIES TAKEN FROM THE LIVES OF SAINTS

BY

THE REV. FREDERICK A. REUTER

Author of Story Sermonettes, Parable Sermonettes for Children's Mass, Bible-Story Sermonettes, Readings and Reflections for the Holy Hour, Moments Divine, Flowers of the Sanctuary, My Happiest Day, etc.

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To

My Friend

THE REV. JAMES J. SMITH

RECTOR OF SAINT MARY'S CHURCH
RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY

Conformably to the decree of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that wherever in this book the words miracle, relic, pilgrimage, apparition, saint, veneration, wonder-worker and such like are applied to persons or to devotions on which Holy Church has so far given no decision, only a purely human and private meaning is to be attached to them.

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INTRODUCTION

These Sermonettes are intended not only for children, but also for their fathers and mothers. It has been the praiseworthy custom of some pastors to announce the Saints of the week to their congregation. This work is a sort of help to them. The subjects selected correspond to the various weeks of the ecclesiastical year. Some prominent Saint distinguished for his love of God and the salvation of his neighbor finds a place on the day the Church commemorates his feast.

These Sermonettes are introduced by a short explanation of the Sunday Gospel and conclude with a story taken from the Lives of the Saints. We often hear children say: "Tell me a true story." The story of a Saint of God is not only true, but also bears a moral lesson. Now-a-days we need such lessons for our young people.

If this work will influence parents and children to come closer to God in their daily lives it will have fulfilled its mission.

Good Samaritan Hospital,
Zanesville, Ohio

HOMILETIC SERMONETTES

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"They shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty." (*St. Luke*, xxi, 27.)

Sometimes you hear people speak of the first and second coming of the Son of God. His first coming was when He was born into the world as a little babe in a stable at Bethlehem. His coming then was in the midst of poverty, suffering, and neglect. But His second coming, at the end of the world, when He comes to judge mankind, will be in power, majesty, and glory.

On that terrible day every one who has ever been born will have to stand before God to receive his final sentence;—both the living, that is to say, those who are alive on earth at the day of judgment, and the dead, that is, all who have died since the beginning of the world.

St. Matthew records in one of his Gospels the prediction of Our Blessed Lord that, before that day comes, there will be terrible signs to warn us of its approach. First of all, there will be earthquakes, wars, and pestilences, which will fill the

whole earth with desolation, and be a warning to sinners that the day of the final reckoning is at hand. The sun shall be darkened, the moon refuse her light, and the stars fall down from heaven. This has a deep meaning when it is understood in the spiritual order. In the darkening of the sun we can observe those who are weak in the faith and fall away from Christ. In the hidden moon we see the ruin produced in men by the decay of charity. Our Lord tells us that if these days were not shortened on account of the elect, none would be saved.

The Son of God will appear upon a cloud to show His glory and power. The clouds in Biblical language are a symbol of the divinity, the chariot, the throne of the omnipotence and majesty of God.

Jesus Christ, seated on His judgment throne, will show His power by sending forth His angels with trumpets and a great voice to summon all mankind from the four quarters of the globe, to come and receive sentence. At the sound of this terrible voice, the dead will arise from their graves, and their bodies being again united with their souls, they will be gathered together before God to give a strict account of their whole lives and receive their final doom.

By the words: "Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand," Our Blessed Lord invites the just to have courage

and to hope, because these signs will make known to them that the time is at hand when they will be freed from the miseries of this earthly life and the bonds of death; when they will receive the reward of their patience, of their constancy, and of their fidelity in the service of God.

Our Holy Mother the Church puts this Gospel at the beginning of Advent to remind us of that General Judgment which Christ will pronounce on the last day.

This same Jesus Christ, whom in a short time we will admire in His humility, lying in a manger for the love of us, to teach us the way to Heaven, will one day return to earth in great majesty to demand an account of the use we have made of His graces and gifts, and to judge us according to our actions.

The Church wants to incite us by a wholesome fear to prepare ourselves to receive Jesus Christ with love at His first coming, and to forsake sin and obey His holy law, so that at His second coming we may appear with confidence and well prepared before His tribunal.

My dear children, during the holy season of Advent we should often picture to ourselves the coming of Christ as Judge, in order to prepare ourselves to celebrate the day when He will come as the Saviour. We should often pray to the Infant Jesus that we may be reborn and grow in our hearts with His holy grace.

The saints fasted, toiled, and wept, not only for the love of God, but to escape eternal damnation. How shall we, with our self-indulgent lives and unexamined consciences, face the judgment seat of Christ?

The truest heroes of all ages constantly lived in the presence of God and thereby prepared themselves for the final sentence. They were real heroes, for by self-denial in an heroic degree and constant prayer they became saints.

In far-off Poland there once lived a boy whose name was Stanislaus Kostka. His parents were wealthy and belonged to the nobility. As a child he showed such purity of soul that the servants always spoke of him as "the Angel." When evil was spoken at his father's table, the boy would turn pale, and if the subject was continued, he would faint.

When Stanislaus was fourteen years old, he and his elder brother, Paul, were sent to Vienna, where they entered a Jesuit school. Stanislaus distinguished himself by his piety and diligence. When, on account of war, the school was closed, Stanislaus and his brother were obliged to take lodging in the house of a Lutheran.

Stanislaus was bright and sweet-tempered. He prayed much, fasted often, and on certain days wore a hair-shirt next to his skin. Before attending his classes he visited the Blessed Sacrament in the church. He recited the Rosary and at-

tended two Masses every day. Every evening he examined his conscience. At midnight he rose to pray. Every Sunday and holyday he received Holy Communion. On these occasions his face seemed to shine like that of an angel.

His brother Paul, on the contrary, was worldly-minded. He loved company and pleasure. The saintly Stanislaus was very offensive to him. In his anger he abused, nay, even struck him. The saintly youth endured the abuse with the greatest patience. He sought to please God and not his brother.

When Stanislaus was about fifteen years old, he had a very severe illness, brought on by Paul's ill-treatment and the penances with which he afflicted his delicate body. The doctors who were in attendance gave no hope of recovery. The boy did not fear to die. The robe of innocence which he had received at Baptism had never been stained by a mortal sin, and he was not attached to anything in this world. The thought of appearing before the judgment seat of God did not distress him in the slightest degree. There was one thing, however, which caused him great suffering and anguish of mind. Living in the house of a man who would rather die than allow a priest to enter his dwelling, it was impossible for Stanislaus to receive the Holy Viaticum. While in health he had approached the Holy Table frequently, and the grace given to him by this Most

Holy Sacrament had enabled him to bear patiently the blows of an inhuman brother. He now remembered to have read of his patroness, St. Barbara, that she never permitted her clients to die without the Holy Viaticum. He prayed fervently to her, and lo! during the night the Sacred Host was brought to him by St. Barbara, accompanied by two angels. Immediately after appeared the Blessed Virgin, holding out the Christ-Child for him to kiss. She said to him: "Go into the Society of my Son." He became entirely well at once, his sole thought now being to enter the Society of Jesus.

St. Francis Borgia, who was General of the Society, admitted him. Stanislaus was then seventeen years old. As a novice he edified his brethren by his obedience, his works of penance, his fervent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and his tender love for the Mother of God.

On the eve of the Feast of St. Lawrence, who was his patron Saint for the month of August, he obtained leave to scourge himself. In the morning he went to Holy Communion, and then laid before the image of the saint a letter in which he begged Our Lady that he might die on her Feast of the Assumption. That night he was seized with a slight fever, and on Assumption eve he received the Last Sacraments. As he lay dying, the brethren brought him a little book containing a litany in his own handwriting of his monthly pa-

tron saints, whom he constantly invoked. At 3 A. M., on the Feast of the Assumption, his face suddenly lit up with joy and he breathed forth his soul to the Mother of God, who had come to conduct him to Heaven. The Church celebrates his feast on November the twenty-sixth.

Dear children, it is the duty of brothers and sisters to give one another a good example. St. Stanislaus did his part well and faithfully. He remained calm, patient, and amiable amid all abuse. The holy life led by the saint caused his brother to turn from his wicked and careless ways, and, in the end Paul, too, died a happy death.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet." (*St. Matthew* xi, 9.)

JOHN THE BAPTIST had been in prison some time, not for a crime, but because of the zeal he showed for the glory of God. Herod was enraged at the rebuke the Baptist had given him on account of the sinful life he was leading.

The disciples of St. John did not know Christ and that is why they were sent to become acquainted with the Messias who had been foretold by the prophets. St. John himself knew Our Lord quite well, for when he baptized Him in the Jordan, he had seen the Holy Ghost descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove, and heard the testimony of the Eternal Father, who said from on high: "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; and he himself had added: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."

The Jews had good reason for asking Jesus whether He was the Messias predicted by the prophets. At His coming all predictions had been fulfilled. The nations of the East had fallen under the power of the Roman Empire, the sev-

enty weeks of years were ended, the sceptre had passed from the land of Juda, and Israel was groaning under the yoke of the foreigner. The Jews, therefore, had every reason to expect the coming of the Messias.

As actions prove the character of a man, Jesus Christ proved that He was the expected Messias by referring to His own actions as those described by the prophets, particularly by Isaias, who had foretold that the expected Saviour would cure the lame, the blind, the leprous, the deaf and the mute, raise the dead, and preach the way of salvation to the poor. Jesus Christ did all these things, and proved that He was the promised Messias by appealing to His own acts, which were precisely those described by the prophet. When St. John's disciples asked Him: "Art thou He who is to come, or look we for another?" Jesus replied: "Go, and relate to John what you have heard, and what you have seen with your own eyes."

Christ did not fail to submit the most convincing proofs that He was the messenger of the Eternal Father, and that those who refused to recognize in Him the promised Saviour were blind, impious, and without excuse.

Why did Christ say: "Blessed are those who shall not be scandalized in Me"? His poverty, His lowliness, His sufferings and death led worldly men to believe that He was anything but

God. Therefore He declared blessed those who would not permit themselves to be deceived by appearances, as did the doubting disciples of St. John, and who, in spite of His humiliation, would recognize Him as true God, as the Messias dying on the cross for the salvation of mankind.

Our Lord praised St. John that those who heard him, struck by the example of that great and wonderful man, whom He called the angel sent by the Lord to prepare His way, might be still more strongly confirmed in the faith. When the disciples of St. John had gone, Jesus spoke words of praise. He did this that they might not think Him guilty of flattery, and to teach us that in praising the virtues of others we should be careful not to give occasion of pride to those whom we praise.

Christ praised in St. John his strength of soul, that did not permit him to be puffed up by the applause of the multitude, nor to be discouraged by sufferings and persecutions. He praised his austere life, his detachment from things of this world, and the greatness of his destiny as the man who was to prepare the way for the Messias and announce His actual presence.

Dear Children, we should learn from St. John to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ; to cause His Holy Name to be praised, by laboring constantly in His service; not to bend like a reed to every wind of temptation; to flee the luxuries of

life and the pomps of the world; and, lastly, to show forth in our own lives the life of Jesus Christ, by following His example and practicing the virtues which He made the models of excellence.

On November the twenty-second, our Holy Mother the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Cecilia. She was born at Rome, in the beginning of the third century. Endowed with genius, beauty and wealth, the noblest of Roman youth sought her hand in marriage. But Jesus was the only Spouse who could satisfy her heart.

Cecilia loved music, and it was her greatest pleasure to spend her leisure moments in singing the praises of God. She also loved solitude, for her pure young heart had long been consecrated to God, to whom she desired to give her whole life. But her parents had other plans for her, as the best of parents have had, and will have, as long as time will last. Many suitors came begging for her hand, until finally her father and mother decided that Cecilia should marry a rich nobleman called Valerian.

God must have given her some knowledge of what was to follow, for she obeyed her parents without resistance. As soon as the wedding-

guests had departed and husband and wife were alone, Valerian felt a feeling of awe creeping over his heart; his wife seemed to him like an angel from Heaven. Joy and peace descended upon his soul as Cecilia then told him of her vow, at the same time explaining the doctrines of Christianity. He asked to be baptized and soon became as fervent a Christian as his angelic bride.

All burning with zeal, Valerian immediately began to explain his new faith to his brother, Tiburtius, whom he tenderly loved. Cecilia joined with her husband, and Tiburtius was soon on his way to Pope Urban, who baptized him also. There were now three brave lions of Christ prepared to enter the arena to be slain.

Valerian and Tiburtius engaged in works of charity. They went about giving alms in places where Cecilia could not go. Meanwhile she was not idle, but made garments and prepared food for the destitute poor, at home with her faithful servants.

Soon the prefect of Rome ordered Valerian and Tiburtius to be brought before him and after many fruitless attempts to gain them back to paganism, caused them to be put to death.

After the death of Valerian and his brother, Cecilia sold all her property, in order to give the proceeds to the poor. She knew her turn would soon arrive. The prefect lost no time in having her arrested. Refusing to offer a libation to the

gods, she was locked up. The death appointed for her was suffocation. She remained a day and a night in a hot-air bath, heated seven times its usual temperature; but as with the three children in the fiery furnace, so it was with her,—the flames had no power over her body. The lictor sent to despatch her struck with trembling hand the three blows which the law allowed, and left her still alive. For two days and nights Cecilia lay with her head half severed on the pavement of her bath, fully sensible, and joyfully awaiting her crown. She died on the third day, as she had desired. As her pure soul ascended to Heaven, for which she had so ardently longed, the Christians assembled around her thought they heard the voices of angels conducting her to paradise.

St. Cecilia teaches us to rejoice in every sacrifice as a pledge of our love of Christ, and to welcome sufferings and death as hastening our union with Him.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"John confessed: I am not the Christ." (*St. John* i, 20.)

St. John the Baptist created quite a sensation in his time. By his retirement into the desert, by his austere penances, by his pure life, and by the power of his preaching, he had attained such a high reputation among the people that they thought he might be Christ, the Saviour of the world. The Pharisees, who were considered as learned in the law, and the prophets sent priests and Levites to St. John to obtain from his own lips reliable information concerning his mission.

On hearing that St. John was not the Christ, they thought he might be the prophet Elias, who had been taken up from the earth in a chariot of fire, and, according to Malachy, was to be sent back to the world before the great and terrible day of the Lord, meaning the Last Judgment. With this prophecy in their minds, the messengers naturally asked John whether he was Elias, who was to return in order to prepare the way for the Saviour of Israel.

Christ called John Elias because he was filled with the spirit and virtue of that holy prophet; but was not Elias in person. St. John, then, was

right in denying that he was Elias in person, and Christ was right in calling him Elias in reference to the spirit and virtue for which he was noted.

St. John even denied that he was a prophet. A prophet is one who foresees and foretells the future. In this sense John the Baptist was not a prophet, because he did not foretell the coming of the Saviour, but announced His actual presence, and pointed Him out when he said: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." On this account he was greater than all the prophets, as Christ Himself declared. When the Precursor called himself "a voice crying in the wilderness," he informed the Jews as to the nature of his mission and at the same time gave them a striking proof of his great humility, for though promised by an angel, born by a miracle of the Most High, and sanctified before his birth, he merely said of himself: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

The messengers who came to St. John were both learned and full of malice. The question they put to him was very insulting. But John answered with a gentleness that was in perfect keeping with his character as a minister of God. He gave an account of his works, added what sufficed to enlighten them, and returned good for evil. He said that he baptized with water, that he came to show them the way to penance and to prepare them to receive the Saviour, who was in

the midst of them and would baptize men in the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins. They did not know Him because they regarded the Messias a poor, humble, common man. St. John said of Christ in effect: "He is the Person who will come after me, who will wash away your sins and sanctify you. He is greater than I, and before me." In this way he pointed out the Saviour, and left them without any excuse for not recognizing Jesus Christ as the Messias.

St. John the Baptist teaches us a great lesson. We should learn to practice humility as he did, by confessing sincerely that we are worthless in the sight of God, by not sounding our own praises even when there may be occasion to do so without danger of boasting, but by suffering with patience harsh words even when performing our duty faithfully. What would we answer if, like St. John, we are asked: "Who art thou?" Grant, O Lord, that we may be able to answer when the time comes: "We are Christians." Lastly, let us apply to ourselves the exhortation: "Make straight the way of the Lord." Let us make every effort to prepare for the spiritual birth of Jesus Christ in our souls.

Many of you boys are called Francis Xavier; the feast day of your Saint is celebrated on De-

cember the third. He was born in the castle of Xavier, a few miles from the city of Pampluna in Spain; hence the surname of Xavier. As a young nobleman Francis Xavier went to Paris to study and become a great lawyer. He was ambitious and wanted to make a name for himself. But two friends with whom he became acquainted showed him there was a higher aim than to have a great name upon earth. Francis became a priest, a member of the Society of Jesus, and one of the greatest missionaries who ever lived.

After his conversion, his greatest desire was to be sent on the foreign missions. He would not ask the favor, for he wanted to do God's will and not his own. One day he received word from his friend and master, St. Ignatius, that the Holy Father had chosen him to go to India to carry the Gospel to the natives. Francis had just one day to get ready for the long journey: time enough to mend his worn-out habit, to say good-bye to a few friends, and to receive the Pope's blessing. When he came to say farewell to his dearest friend and spiritual father, St. Ignatius noticed how poorly he was clad. "What," he said, "you have not a proper garment to cover you. Here, take this!" and he took off a waist-coat which protected his own chest from cold, and gave it to his son. Then Francis was ready, with his old habit on his back and his Breviary under his arm. Remember, Francis Xavier was of noble birth, and

had been brought up in luxury, for he was the youngest of a wealthy family, and his mother's darling. On board ship he refused to allow anybody to wait on him, but cooked his own food and washed his own garments.

None of us can form any idea of the state of things on board ship in those days. The ships were of enormous size, divided into four or five stories. Sometimes there were a thousand people on board. The voyage to India generally took six months. Provisions spoiled, water putrefied and the resulting bad diet brought on fever, swellings, pestilence, sometimes madness. There were a thousand persons on board the ship on which Francis sailed, and they seem to have been afflicted with more than the usual amount of illness. The patients lay about on the deck, anywhere they could find a corner, with hardly a person to look after them. Francis nursed the poor sufferers night and day, cleansed their sores, washed their poor linen, prayed for them at their bedside, comforted and strengthened them.

Having arrived at Goa, the Saint took a room in the hospital, so that he might be at the service of the sick. He portioned out his day thus: Three hours for sleep, which he very often took at the bedside of a patient, stretched on the floor. The rest of the night was given to prayer, and this refreshed him more, both in body and soul,

than sleep ordinarily refreshes men. When morning dawned, Francis made his rounds, visiting each patient in the hospital and giving him relief and consolation. Later in the day he said Mass, heard confessions, gave instructions, and preached, in churches or in the open air. On feast days he went round the town with a bell and gathered the children for catechetical instruction. The little ones, two or three hundred in number, would follow him and listen to his instructions. With the children came the parents, and soon a great change was noticeable among the people. Men turned to God and began to understand that there is another world worth living for.

St. Francis's most ardent desire was to go to China and die for his crucified Lord. But God had other designs for his servant. He was to give up everything in this world, even the desire to lay down his life for his faith. Xavier fell ill. His friends were good friends indeed, but bad nurses. They applied remedies that must have tried the Saint a hundred times more than his fever. An unskilled hand bled him for a pain in his side, and as a result, his nerves contracted, causing him untold suffering. He was taken from the ship, where the rocking motion was too much for him, into a little hut made of green boughs and carpeted with straw. In his delirium he prayed, and his prayers were loving ejaculations: "Jesus,

Son of David, have mercy on me!'' ''Show thyself a Mother!'' He breathed his last holding the crucifix in his hands.

Make a picture of him. He was quite tall; full and robust of body; pleasing and majestic of bearing; fair, with blue eyes. His hair was of chestnut color, very thick, and he wore a beard. If any boy wants a patron who will help him to love God with all his heart, and serve Him all his days, let him choose this dear Saint, whose only love was God, and whose whole life was devoted to his fellowmen, for God's sake.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." (*St. Luke* iii, 4.)

The Evangelist gives a minute description of the rulers and high-priests who lived at the time when St. John preached, in order to establish the time and year in which the Precursor was to appear and with him Jesus Christ Himself. He also wanted to show that the Redeemer had manifested Himself to the world at the precise time prophesied by the patriarch Jacob sixteen hundred years before. The time foretold was when the sceptre should pass from Israel into the hands of strangers, as were Tiberius Cæsar, Lysanius, and the two brothers Herod Antipas and Philip, sons of the Idumean Herod who commanded the slaughter of the Innocents.

Another reason why St. Luke wrote so minutely of the rulers and high-priests was to show the part taken by them in the history of Christ. Tiberius ruled the Roman Empire at the time of Christ's preaching and death. It was he who, struck by Christ's miracles and sanctity, sought to have His name enrolled among the gods of the Empire. Pilate, his procurator in Judea, pronounced the sentence of death after he had sol-

emnly declared Christ's innocence. Herod, who could not find Him guilty, considered Him a madman, and Philip put John the Baptist to death. Lastly Annas and Caiphas, the high-priests, were the chief enemies of Christ.

The Lord spoke to John in the desert, telling him that He had prepared him for the great office of Precursor. Promised by the angel, born of a mother advanced in years, sanctified before his birth, enriched with heavenly virtues, John lived amid the horrors of the desert as a model of penance, an angel rather than a man. In the fulness of time God invested him with his mission and urged him to raise his voice, preach penance, and announce the presence of the Saviour.

When Isaias spoke of the voice of one crying in the wilderness, he referred to John the Baptist, who made his voice heard in the desert between the Jordan and Chaldea: the same through which the Hebrews had passed when, after their captivity in Babylon, they returned to their country to rebuild the Temple. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," meant, Correct your ways, do penance. The prophet in foretelling that the valleys would be filled up, the mountains made low, and the crooked ways straight, announced that the grace of God would remove all obstacles that make salvation difficult; that by means of grace the meek and lowly would be filled with heavenly strength; that the proud would be humbled; that the erring

would return to the straight path; that affections of men would be regulated and their passions overcome. The history and the annals of the Church show that this prophecy has been fulfilled. The gospel has spread throughout the world, and this has been made possible by the Apostles and their successors. The last words of the Gospel refer to this fact: "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

My Children, we should be strengthened in our faith by considering that everything regarding it has been prepared, foretold, and completed by the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. We should also learn from the words of St. John that the only means of participating in the grace of the nativity of Christ is to do penance for our sins, reform our ways, and return to God with all the affections of our heart.

There is a Saint whose name is a synonym for generous giving. As the patron of children, especially of school-boys, his popularity knows no end. Is he not the Santa Claus of the children, indeed, to be depended upon when the slowly circling year brings around again the joyous season of giving? Very wise and discriminate giving is ascribed to Santa Claus, who demands that the

children who expect his gifts must deserve them by being good at home and at school.

St. Nicholas, whether we read of him in English, Latin, German, Italian, or any other language, is always described as one who greatly loved his fellow-men. His Feast is celebrated on the sixth of December.

Nicholas of Myra was born towards the end of the third century. We are told that even as a baby he observed the Wednesday and Friday fast, refusing to take his mother's milk on those days. Happy are they who, from infancy, grow accustomed to exercises of devotion, penance, and perfect obedience. This practice of taking only one meal a day, at sunset, Nicholas kept up all his life. When he went to college he sought the friendship of those who would give him a closer knowledge of God. He avoided the company of dissipated persons. Sin he shunned like a poisonous reptile. He practiced self-denial in food and sleep to a heroic degree. His greatest pleasure was prayer and visiting the Blessed Sacrament. As a student he surpassed his classmates in learning and in piety.

The Bishop of Myra, his uncle, ordained him to the priesthood and appointed him abbot of a monastery. As a priest he led a saintly life. His parents having died during an epidemic, he distributed all their wealth among the poor and destitute.

Throughout his life he retained the bright and guileless manners of his early years, and showed himself the special protector of the innocent and the wronged.

Endowed with wonderful skill in knowing where those who most deserved his gifts might be found, St. Nicholas once became aware of the sorrow and perplexity of a certain nobleman, who from having been a man of great wealth was reduced to sudden poverty. As is usually the case, a whole family was involved, and in this instance it proved to be the three daughters of the unfortunate nobleman, who were on the verge of starvation. Determined, if possible, to save them, the Saint went out by night, and, taking a bag of gold, flung it into the bed-room window of the sleeping father, who on awakening, deemed the gift a godsend, and with it dowered his eldest child. The Saint, overjoyed at his success, made like ventures for the second and third daughter; but as he stole away, the third time, the father, who was watching, overtook him and kissed his feet, saying "Nicholas, why dost thou conceal thyself from me? Thou art my helper, and he who has delivered me and my daughters from hell."

The Feast of the Saint, as the special patron of youth, is kept with great pomp in all schools and colleges.

From Saint Nicholas we learn especially the

love of innocence. Those who would enter Heaven must be as little children, whose greatest glory is their innocence. Now, two things are ours to do: first, to preserve innocence in ourselves, or, if we have lost this virtue, to regain it by penance; secondly, to love and shield it in others.

On Christmas day I would like the Holy Child to give you two gifts, namely, the *spirit of prayer* and *generosity.* That means you should love prayer, make it as much your business as study, or work, or eating, or sleeping. The other gift is *generosity,* a love of giving, not spending. Some children think they are generous because they make money fly. To give to the poor, to the old, to the delicate, to those who cannot give in return, to unattractive people, to our enemies—this is generosity. There is a little girl who saves and hands over to one she loves her precious savings for the poor. She could give it herself, but she wants to give up even the pleasure of spending. That child will have a sweet reward in Heaven!

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

"Behold, this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel." (*St. Luke* ii, 34.)

In to-day's Gospel we are told of the predictions that Simeon and Anna made when the child Jesus was presented in the temple in compliance with the Jewish law, which required the presentation of every first-born child.

It is an article of faith that Jesus Christ, as man, had no father. He was born of Mary, who was a virgin, before, during, and after His birth. St. Luke calls Joseph father because he was reputed by all who were ignorant of the great mystery to be the natural father of Jesus Christ, and as He had over Him the authority of a father, St. Augustine says the Gospel uses the word father. Joseph and Mary wondered at the things they heard from Simeon and Anna, for it was indeed surprising to hear these pious persons instructed by the Holy Ghost about the Divinity, the character and future life of Christ.

When Simeon said that Jesus Christ would be the occasion of the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, he merely repeated the prediction made by Isaias that for some the future Messias would

be the cause of sanctification and for others a stumbling-block and an occasion of scandal. The fact then makes the prediction evident, since it is seen that many, believing in Christ, will rise from the death of sin and obtain eternal life, whereas others will be obstinate in their blindness, fall into greater sins, and finally cast themselves into the abyss of hell.

Simeon also said that Christ was set for a sign that shall be contradicted. According to the best interpreters, among whom are Origen, St. Basil, and Tertullian, the word "sign" here means prodigy or warning. In this sense the Incarnation, life, teaching, miracles, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ are a prodigy which could never have been imagined by the human mind. This prodigy many believed, but many contradicted it, going so far as to crucify Him and continue to persecute Him even now, when He is sitting at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. It is in this light we should consider the words of Simeon; in this light his prophecy has been verified.

The sword that was to pierce the soul of Mary was the grief and sorrow by which, at the foot of the Cross, she became the Queen of Martyrs. Let us admire her strength of soul and resignation to the will of God. Let us learn from her to accept patiently the hardships which it may please God to send us.

Anna, the aged woman who departed not from the Temple, was the daughter of Phanuel. She was married when young; after seven years her husband died, and she remained a widow, leading a devout life to the age of eighty-four years. She dwelled in rooms adjoining the Temple and instructed the young maidens sent there by their pious parents, directing them by her good example, her piety, and her prayers. Blessed are those who imitate her example in directing souls to God!

Anna said that the Child was indeed the expected Messias, the Son of God, clothed in the flesh; that He had come to take away the sins of the world and to redeem the human race from the slavery of Satan and from eternal death. All this she told to those pious souls who, relying on the faith of the Patriarchs and trusting in the promises of the Prophets, believed and hoped in the Christ to come, and awaited from Him the redemption of Israel.

For our spiritual benefit we can learn a lesson from these two old people, Simeon and Anna. They led a holy life and always believed in and hoped for Jesus Christ to come. They obtained the grace to see Him with their own eyes and to press Him to their bosoms. The Holy Ghost enlightened them at the proper time thus enabling them to recognize the Saviour and to announce Him to others.

Dear Children, if we begin in childhood to lead a holy life and persevere in good works, as they did, we can, like them, embrace Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth. By uniting ourselves to Him in Holy Communion, we will obtain light and be able to make Him known to many. And, lastly, at the end of our lives we shall be resigned, as Anna and Simeon were, and be able to say with them that we die happily.

Simeon and Anna in extreme old age delight in God; there is no sense of emptiness in their hearts as in the heart of worldlings; they have not grown disgusted with God and the Temple; there is no cry of despair in their simple hearts, such as there was in the world's wise men. Need we fear that in our old age, in the days of our weakness, we shall be cast out, put aside? Do we not see that with Christ old age is acceptable, that His sanctuary, His service, His rewards are open to the old as well as the young, to the weak as well as strong?

My dear boys and girls, I expect you have noticed long ago that the Feast of the Circumcision, which we call New Year's Day, is always kept a week after Christmas. Our Lord was eight days old when He received His Name.

The angel told Joseph what name to give to the Holy Child and the reason why: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

There was a saint who loved the Holy Name of Jesus very much. He is called BERNARDINE OF SIENA. He was of noble birth, but lost his mother when he was three years old, and his father before he was seven. His education was entrusted to a pious aunt, who imparted to the youthful soul sentiments of piety and a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This aunt loved him as if he had been her own son. He was modest, humble, and devout, and took great delight in prayer, visiting churches, serving at Mass, and hearing sermons, which he would repeat again to his companions with admirable fidelity and graceful gestures. Although very young, he had a great compassion for the poor.

One day it happened that his aunt sent a poor man away from the door without alms, because there was but one loaf of bread in the house. Bernardine was much troubled to see the beggar go away empty-handed and said to his aunt: "For God's sake, let us give something to this poor man; otherwise I will neither dine nor sup this day. I had rather he should have a dinner than I."

From early youth he fasted every Saturday in honor of the Blessed Virgin. At the age of

eleven he began to go to school in Siena. The able masters who had him in charge admired the solidity of his judgment, but even more his earnestness, modesty, and virtue. If he chanced to hear any unbecoming word, he testified by blushing how it wounded his heart. Otherwise he was most condescending, civil and respectful to all.

Bernardine's modesty was a check to the most brazen and kept them straight in his presence. If the conversation was too free, it was dropped when he appeared, and the most impudent rakes would say: "Hush, here comes Bernardine:" When an impure monster once had the insolence to solicit him to sin, the Saint, not content with testifying his scorn and indignation, excited the whole troop of his little innocent playmates against the lewd villain. They picked up stones and made him ashamed to show his face again.

Bernadine was exceedingly comely, but his known virtue secured him from further assaults; and he never ceased to beg of God the grace of purity, particularly through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When he had completed his course of philosophy, he applied himself to the study of Canon Law, and afterwards to the study of Holy Scripture.

At seventeen years of age Bernardine enrolled himself in the Confraternity of Our Lady in the hospital of Scala and served the sick. During the dreadful pestilence of the year 1400 he persuaded

twelve young men to assist him in the hospital. He set an example of cheerfulness, humility, and diligence in performing the most menial offices. The young men vied with one another to surpass their leader. It is astonishing how many lives he saved and with what charity and pains he attended the patients, night and day.

Later in life he took the habit of St. Francis of Assisi and after the year of his novitiate, made his profession on the eighth of September. Having been born on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, he chose the same day for the principal actions of his life; on it he took the religious habit, made his vows, said his first Mass, and preached his first sermon. His fervor increased daily. He relished insults and humiliations, and practiced humility and self-denial in a heroic degree. When he went through the streets in a threadbare habit, the boys sometimes cast stones at him. This gave him great pleasure.

So greatly was he affected by the mysteries of the Incarnation and the sufferings of the Son of God, that he could never pronounce the Sacred Name without deep sentiments of love and adoration. Often at the end of a sermon, he would show his hearers the Sacred Name of Jesus cut with golden letters on a board, inviting them to adore the Savior with him on their knees.

Like all the saints of God, Bernardine had his crosses. He was denounced as a heretic and his

devotion as idolatrous. After many trials he lived to see his innocence established, and a lasting memorial of his work set up in the Church. The Feast of the Holy Name commemorates at once his sufferings and his triumph. He died on Ascension eve, 1444, while his brethren were chanting the antiphon, "Father, I have manifested Thy Name to men." His feast is celebrated on the twentieth of May.

Let us learn from the life of St. Bernardine the power of the Holy Name of Jesus in life and death. His constant prayer was: "O my Jesus, crucified for me, pour out Thyself upon me, and with the nails of Thy love attach my whole being to Thyself."

SUNDAY BETWEEN NEW YEAR AND EPIPHANY

"We have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore Him." (*St. Matt.* ii, 2.)

WITHIN a few days the Church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany or of the Three Major Kings as it is also called. It is a feast of devotion only, as the Church does not oblige us to attend Holy Mass on that day under pain of mortal sin.

From the words of the sacred text it is to be inferred that the miraculous star stopped over the place where the Child Jesus reposed, and this attracted the attention of the Magi and caused them to enter the stable. It is not difficult to imagine the impression the presence of the God-man made on them and the grace it wrought in them. He who, when grown up, knew how to call His Apostles after Him, could as a Child reveal Himself to the Magi and make them His worshippers.

The Gospel tells us they offered Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. By presenting gold, says St. Gregory, they recognized Him as King, by offering incense they acknowledged Him as God, and by giving myrrh they indicated His human nature. They proclaimed by the nature

of their gifts the faith that was in their hearts, says Saint Leo, and with full knowledge venerated in His person the two natures, the divine and the human in Jesus Christ.

The Magi were men distinguished for their knowledge, particularly of astronomy. According to some Fathers and Doctors they were petty kings of the East, who came, as was foretold in the seventy-first Psalm, from Arabia and from Saba to offer their gifts and adoration to the Messias.

According to the opinion of the Fathers, they were the first of the Gentiles who were called to enter the Church of Christ. They saw the star which, according to prophecy was to appear when the promised Saviour was born, and by the interior operation of grace they recognized it as the sign of His birth and hastened to follow it.

We must admire the promptness with which they corresponded to the invitation of grace. Immediately on the appearance of the star they, heedless of the dictates of human prudence, the difficulties of the journey, and the uncertainty of success, left their homes and set out in search of the Child; and while thus seeking Him in obedience to the voice of Heaven, they teach us with what disregard of human interests, with what solicitude and courage, we should always follow Divine inspiration and the call of Heaven.

The star guided them toward Jerusalem. An

ancient prophet had called Jerusalem the queen of the world and the joy of all the earth. In Jerusalem was the one Temple dedicated to the true God; to Jerusalem came worshippers from all parts of the world; there were preserved the holy books, and there were found the great teachers of the law. For this reason the Magi directed their steps to the capital of the Jewish nation, reasonably hoping to find there a guide who would conduct them to the desired place. We learn from this to have recourse to those who, by reason of their sacred character, office, learning, and prudence, may direct our steps when we feel impelled by some interior call of Heaven.

The coming of the Magi and their search for the new-born King of the Jews should have attracted the attention of the whole city. But the people of Jerusalem did not recognize or strive to know the Saviour. It would be unfortunate for us if we, like the Jews, should attribute to accident or fate that which is God's work.

Having failed to obtain the desired information, the Magi continued on their way. We should comfort ourselves with the reflection that when, like the Magi, we sincerely seek to know the divine will, and seek in it the proper manner by consulting learned and enlightened teachers, we will be led to the desired end. God is faithful. Let us submit to His guidance, and He will send us His light to direct us.

We should learn to recognize in the Magi the first-fruits of our vocation to the faith, and to thank God that we have been made Christians. We should learn also to follow the Divine call and to offer to Jesus Christ the gold of charity, in word, deed, and thought; the incense of prayer, burning sweetly in aspirations and loving words to Our Lord; the myrrh of self-denial, little things suffered joyfully for His sake. Such are rich gifts in our Master's eyes.

With the Three Kings we can class St. Brigid, the Patroness of Ireland, who throughout her life offered the gold of charity, the incense of prayer, and the myrrh of self-denial. Her feast comes on the first of February.

From her earliest years Brigid was distinguished among her little playmates for her love of God and her charity to the poor. She was so charitable that she would gladly have given away all that she had.

St. Brigid was a most beautiful and charming child. As the custom then was, she took part in all the household duties, and thus her sanctity was first revealed. One day, after milking the cows, she gave the contents of her pail to some poor persons who were passing, and then, fearing her

mother's anger, prayed God to make good the loss. On reaching home her pail was found to be fuller than those of the other maidens.

From her childhood she gave everything she could lay hands on to the poor. The child, going about among the poor people, found her stock of provisions exhausted, so great was the distress at that time in the land. At a loss how to assist the poverty-stricken, she came upon a great and beautiful sword hanging in her father's hall. The sunlight sparkled upon it, bringing into view the wonderful jewels with which it was ornamented. She picked out the gems and sold them. With the proceeds she bought food for the poor. The sword was a gift of the King to her father, and when she was asked how she dared to deface the gift of the King, she said: "My Lord, the same was bestowed upon a greater King. For what is given to the poor of Christ is given to Him."

Her father determined to bestow her in marriage without delay. He was wealthy and powerful and stood in high favor with the King. He who should win her for his bride might count upon riches and honors. But the pure and holy maiden had long since resolved to become the bride of Christ.

Her beauty found her many suitors, but Christ was her only love, and one night Brigid prayed to her Holy Spouse to be pleased to take away the

gift of beauty with which he had dowered her from babyhood. The Lord heard her prayer. The next day, and for many weeks and months afterwards Brigid's beautiful face was spoiled by an ugly sore.

The Saint thanked her heavenly Bridegroom for so readily coming to her assistance. Again she asked her father to permit her to dedicate herself to her Lord; and this time, his daughter's beauty being gone, he gave his consent.

Brigid left her father's house, and out of mortification and love of suffering, lived in a little cell she had made for herself in the hollow of an oak tree. The people had such faith in her goodness and piety that they called the tree in which she lived *Kill-dara*, or Church of the Oak. The city of Kildare was built near the spot where St. Brigid's oak tree once stood. Presently her great beauty returned to her, and we are told that the loveliness of her face reminded every one of the statues of the Blessed Virgin seen in the churches, and for this reason Saint Brigid is sometimes called by the sweet name, "Mary of the Irish."

Some of St. Brigid's former girl companions came to live near her, and as they, too, wished to dedicate themselves to God, she founded a convent, where they all lived together, praising and glorifying God by their prayers and their holy lives, and served Him by waiting on the poor who

came to them. They also looked after the sick. Their convent was the first convent of nuns founded in Ireland.

In the year 523, the gentle Brigid died. Her body was laid in the same shrine where Saint Patrick's relics reposed.

Outward resemblance to Our Lady was Saint Brigid's privilege, but all are bound to grow like her in interior purity of heart. This grace St. Brigid has obtained in a wonderful degree for the daughters of her native land, and will never fail to procure for all her devout clients. "If you love Mary, if you wish to please her, make her your model."

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast." (*St. Luke* ii, 42.)

St. Luke tells us that at the age of twelve Jesus went with His holy Mother and St. Joseph to Jerusalem to take part in the festival which was solemnized for seven days in the Temple, and the Feast of the Pasch or Passover. These days being over, He was lost from their sight and remained in Jerusalem in the Temple, while they set out for their home, believing that He was in the company of His relatives.

Mary and Joseph cannot be blamed for negligence on this occasion. God had thus disposed it, and the greatest human vigilance cannot avail against the dispositions of Providence. The Jews, who came to Jerusalem at Easter and returned home again, did not travel all together, but in little groups or companies, in which the men were separated from the women; they met only in the evening at the stopping-place. This explains how the parents of Jesus could make a day's journey out of Jerusalem without missing the Divine Child. It was only when they met at the stopping-

place, and all their kinsfolk had arrived, that his absence was discovered.

Thinking the Holy Child lost, they were in great affliction, and speedily returned to Jerusalem, hoping to find Him there. Mary and Joseph lost Jesus without any fault of theirs. But if we lose Him, it is by our own fault, for He is lost only by mortal sin.

The affliction of Mary and Joseph teach us that even souls who are most dear to God are not exempt from trials and tribulations, and that God sometimes withdraws Himself from them, leaving them in despondency, fear, and temptation, for the sole purpose of increasing their virtue and their glory in Heaven.

Sinners ought to learn from these holy persons what ought to be the sentiments of their own hearts when they have lost God by their sins; how eagerly they should seek to find Him by repentance. Furthermore, they should have recourse to the friends of God (the saints) to obtain the graces necessary for a true conversion.

The reply of Jesus to His Mother seems rather harsh but in reality it contains a lesson. He teaches us that when there is question of the glory of God, the interests of religion, or duties of conscience, we should disregard all human considerations. Jesus gave Mary an opportunity to exercise, by a respectful and silent acceptance of His instructive words, the virtues of humility

and meekness, which she did in the most perfect manner.

After leaving Jerusalem Jesus went with His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph to the village of Nazareth, in the tribe of Zabulon, where they took up their abode. Nazareth is about seventy miles from Jerusalem. From this we may know the inconveniences these holy persons underwent in order to be present at the solemnities in Jerusalem. In view of this fact, how guilty are those who for a slight cause, or no cause at all, absent themselves from divine service on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

In the house of Joseph Jesus Christ lived poor and unknown, in submission and obedience to his foster-father and to His Mother. He obeyed them cheerfully, humbly, and promptly, not for a few weeks or months only, but up to His thirtieth year. And Scripture tells us that He grew in wisdom and grace before God and man, *i. e.*, He daily gave clearer evidence of the infinite fulness of His divine wisdom, grace and sanctity, and gradually revealed them to the outside world.

What a wonderful lesson! If Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, did not refuse to obey Mary and Joseph, we should not refuse to obey our parents, superiors, and all who are charged with our care and education. What a consolation to think, when we obey, that we imitate Jesus Christ, who by His submission to

Mary and Joseph sanctified obedience and made it supernaturally meritorious.

It is stated that Jesus increased in age, in wisdom, and in grace. From this we should learn that we also, as we advance in years, should increase in the knowledge of religion, proficiency in virtue, and fidelity to the duties of our state in life. As Jesus increased in grace before men and in merit before God, so we, as we grow older, should make ourselves beloved of men by our charity, and beloved of God by abounding merit, by exercises of piety, and above all by frequenting the holy Sacraments.

In the Lives of the Saints we read of a little boy who was on intimate terms with the Blessed Mother of God and the Infant Jesus who was his playmate.

The little hero of this story is HERMAN JOSEPH, whom, on account of his great innocence, the Church has called Blessed. His life encourages poor children to become saints. Herman was brought up in abject poverty, since his parents had lost a great fortune and were reduced to almost nothing. In the humble living-room of his home there was a little altar with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Here his mother would

often kneel, her eyes raised to the image of the Virgin. Before Herman understood why she did this, he imitated her example and knelt down beside her, his childish eyes fixed upon the statue. The longer he looked at it, the more lovely the features of Mary seemed to him. Thus the image of Mary and Jesus became enshrined in his heart, and though poor, Herman was happy because Mary and Jesus were always with him.

Herman's father and mother were very pious. Fully aware of the many dangers and temptations to which the very poor are exposed, they impressed upon him daily the duty of putting his confidence in God, and warned him against taking anything, were it only an apple or a nut, belonging to others. They trained him to make a virtue of necessity by contenting himself with little. He was especially bidden to keep away from bad boys, or those who frequented their company, and every night gave his mother a full account of all he had done, seen, and heard during the day.

Herman was an obedient child, and his sweet temper and modesty lightened considerably the hardships under which his parents labored. As a little child he used to spend all his playtime in a church at Cologne, before an image of Mary, where he received many favors.

He loved to study and attended school joyfully.

Daily he made a visit to a church, which was on his way to school, and knelt for a few minutes before the statue of Our Mary. He greeted Mary and the Infant Jesus, and spoke to them with childish familiarity and confidence. He told them of his trials and needs, and made the Divine Infant the confidant of all that happened to him. Often his talk took this form: "Dear Jesus, I had nothing for breakfast this morning but a little piece of dry bread, and I am still hungry. But all the same, I am content; for Thou, the Son of God, didst hunger also."

Then he would impart to his Divine Friend what he had studied and what he wished to do during the day. Finally, he would take leave of Mother and Son in this fashion: "I would like to stay much longer with Thee and Thy Holy Mother, but it is time for me to go to school. Give me Thy blessing and don't forget me till I come back."

What a pity all scholars do not follow Herman's example in this respect! Surely, our young folk could visit a church and greet Jesus and Mary more frequently than they do. A few minutes of devout prayer, such as Herman's would prove of great help to them in getting through the day.

In the summer time Herman carried flowers to the church and laid them before Our Lady's statue. One day he brought an apple and offered it to the

Blessed Virgin. It is said that she reached out her hand, took the apple, and thanked him smilingly.

The poor child's clothes were thin and barely kept him warm, but he consoled himself by thinking of the poverty of the Christ-Child and His Blessed Mother in the stable at Bethlehem. And before the image he told his heavenly Mother of his hunger and his cold, saying: "O Mother, help me."

And she did. One winter day, while he was praying at her altar, she said to him: "Herman, why are you barefoot in this cold weather?" "Because, I have no shoes," the boy answered. "Then go to that rock," Mary said to him, "under it you will find money. Take it and buy yourself shoes."

Herman obeyed and found the money. Then Mary promised him if he would look under the rock every time he was in need he would find money enough to get what he needed. And so it was. When it became known where the poor boy got the money, other boys began to go to church, too, and to pray. But they had not Herman's innocence and faith, and Mary worked no miracle for them. The stone proved a bank to Herman alone.

When Herman was twelve years old, he was sent to the monastery at Steinfeld. Here he served for some time as sacristan. In the novitiate he

was a model of piety and humility, of industry and obedience, to all his fellow students. He gladly waited on his brethren, though he himself ate little but bread and water. He slept only a few hours, on the hard floor. He lived a long and edifying life in the cloister.

All poor children can have Jesus and Mary with them and may be happy in their company, as was Blessed Herman Joseph. No boys or girls can ever discover such kind, gracious friends as they already have in Mary and her Divine Son. Do not approach our Blessed Mother with set prayers only. Be intimate with her; confide in her; commend to her your every want and project, small as well as great. It is a childlike reliance and a trustful appeal which she delights to reward.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage." (*St. John* ii, 2.)

It may seem strange to many that Jesus was invited to a wedding, yet it was not without deep significance that He appeared at the marriage feast in Cana. It is said that the husband was Simon, the son of Cleophas, the brother of St. Joseph, and therefore a nephew of the Blessed Virgin and a cousin, according to the law, of Jesus. We may be sure that at that feast there were no improprieties and no overindulgence, vices which dishonor the tables of many Christians. Christ, as St. John Chrysostom tells us, wished to give to the world a useful lesson.

At the wedding Jesus took occasion to manifest His divine power, by which those present were led to recognize in Him the expected Messias. Besides, He prepared a condemnation of those heretics who taught that Matrimony was the work of the devil. And lastly, He wished to teach us that we should not refuse to contribute, when we are able, to the innocent enjoyment of our friends,

for in this way the bond of peace and Christian friendship is preserved.

St. Bernard tells us that Mary is truly the Mother of mercy, since she took such a deep interest in the success of the feast. She foresaw the shame and confusion of the husband and wife when the wine would give out before the feast was over. In her goodness and charity she begged Jesus to relieve them from this humiliation by a miracle. Oh, that all Christians were equally solicitous to spare their neighbors shame and confusion! But all too frequently the confusion of others is a triumph and a joy to selfish people, who talk about charity without knowing what it is.

Jesus replied to His Mother that His hour had not yet come. St. John Chrysostom says that up to this time only the Blessed Virgin had noticed the failure of the wine, and if He had worked the requested miracle at once, she alone would have known of it. Hence it was necessary to wait until all the guests were aware that the wine had given out, so that all would be witnesses of the miracle and recognize the omnipotence and divinity of Jesus. It was perhaps for this reason also that Mary said to the servants: "Do whatever He commands you."

Christ, being God, could have produced the wine in some other manner, but it pleased Him, continues St. Chrysostom, to make use of the servants, that they might see the prodigy wrought

and testify to the truth of the miracle by which His divinity was made manifest.

In performing this miracle Jesus prepared the way for that still greater miracle, which He was to work in instituting the Most Holy Sacrament. By proving that He was able to convert water into wine, He showed that He could also convert bread and wine into His body and blood. Jesus wished to teach us that, as water in the order of nature serves to purify the body, so His Precious Blood, symbolized by the wine, sanctifies the soul in the order of grace.

From the married couple we may learn how to conduct ourselves at table and at nuptials. We must act as if Jesus were invited and present. Jesus will bless the nuptials of those who are led by a right motive and not by caprice, interest, or passion; and He will bless our meals when sobriety, modesty, and the fear of God are present.

If the Blessed Virgin Mary felt such compassion for that poor couple in a temporal matter, how much may we not hope from her when the object is spiritual and in favor of our souls. Mary will look down upon us with favor when we faithfully comply with all that Jesus Christ commands us to do, by imitating her holy virtues: particularly her humility, mercy, modesty, charity towards our neighbor and her zeal for the glory of God.

The Church has set aside the second Sunday after Epiphany for the Feast of the Holy Name. In the history of English Saints we meet with one who loved Jesus from childhood.

Lord Marmaduke Ward had a daughter who was christened Joan, but afterwards became known by her Confirmation name, Mary. She was a devout baby, and her first word was the Holy Name of Jesus. One day, when she was only just begining to walk and was helping herself along by means of chairs, she was on the verge of falling down stairs. Her mother, who was near, called out in terror: "Jesus, save my child!" And the baby turned round and said, "Jesus!" It was long before she uttered another word.

Again, when Mary was much older, she fell and hurt herself so badly that she was stunned. She thought that if she could only pronounce the word "Jesus," all would be well. So with much difficulty she said: "Jesus," whereupon all her pains left her. To the end of her life there was to her no sweeter word, no name she loved half so well, as this Holy Name "Jesus." The letters she wrote began and ended with "Jesus." She died repeating the Holy Name three times.

When Mary was about ten, a dreadful fire broke out at Mulwith, one of her father's estates. Her father was so busy directing the efforts of his men that he did not miss three of his children.

When he noticed that they were missing, he plunged into the burning house, and found Mary with her brother and sister saying the Rosary with the greatest devotion. Mary explained that she knew that the house was on fire, but thought Our Lady would not let them be burnt, because it was her feast day, and so she had contented herself with saying the Rosary.

Mary loved passionately her father, and he was a man to be loved. We have this description of him: "He was famous in that country for his exceeding comeliness of person, sweetness and beauty of face, and activity, the knightly exercise in which he excelled, and, above all, for his constancy and courage in the Catholic religion, admirable charity to the poor, so as in extreme dearth never was a poor man denied at his gate. Commonly sixty, eighty, and sometimes a hundred in a day received alms from him; and yet he was also famous for his valor and fidelity to his friends." Now this was a father to admire, and Mary dreaded to offend him. One day, when she was yet very small, Mary was playing with another little girl in the room where her father was writing. Suddenly her companion uttered an oath. Mary was shocked. She knew there was nothing her father disliked more than bad language. So, to show her horror, she repeated the offensive word in a loud voice. Her cry attracted

her father's attention; he caught what she was saying, but did not know that it was a mere repetition. Quite against his principle, he strode up to the terrified child, and corrected her then and there. The emphasis laid on *corrected,* renders it impossible to mistake the kind of punishment inflicted, especially as we know the rod was not usually spared in the nurseries of those days.

Mary Ward, as a child, was not by any means perfect. She had faults like other children. Thus she liked to be noticed and praised; gave way to superstition, etc. But valiantly she fought these faults. To overcome her daintiness she would take up pail and water and scour the court. "She washed the linen, cleansed the plates, scrubbed the rooms, and fed the fowl." And all this in the house of relatives, where her position might have been misunderstood. Mary was a beautiful child. An old biographer says of her: "Her features were exquisite, her look angelic, and her modesty sweet and graceful."

She became the foundress of a large religious order, which has spread over all the world, and died near the Old Bar Convent, York, where her religious children have worked for more than two centuries to do what she did in her life,—bring up children to know, love, and serve God. She was a mother any child would have coveted, always bright and joyful. She could not bear to

see gloom on people's faces. "Three things I love," she used to say; "young people devout, old people patient, sick people joyous." Even when dying, Mary praised and blessed God with joy. The Church calls her Blessed.

"Behold, a leper came and adored Him." (*St. Matthew* viii, 2.)

A LEPER came and adored Jesus. This leper who was healed by the Redeemer was an image of man corrupted by sin and cured by means of penance through the powerful grace of Christ.

The leper on bended knees cried out: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!" This unfortunate man by his conduct teaches us with what humility, faith, and meekness the contrite sinner should present himself before God; and by his words gives us an example of the great confidence and submission to the divine will with which penitents should implore the healing of their souls and beg to be freed from temptations.

In a spiritual way God does with the sinner as He did with the leper. God reaches forth His hand and touches the sinner when in His mercy He arouses him calls him, and softens his heart, however hardened it may be by sin. He says, "I will," when by His powerful grace He enables the sinner to break his chains. He says, "Be thou healed," when He applies the merits of Jesus Christ to the guilty soul by the ministry of

the priest, and frees him from the leprosy of sin.

There was a reason why Christ commanded the leper to show himself to the priests and to offer the gifts prescribed by law. The law obliged lepers, when cured, to present themselves to the priests, that they might be declared free from legal uncleanness, and on such occasions they were required to make an offering. If Jesus had dispensed the leper from this custom, He would have belittled the Mosaic Law without reason and caused surprise and scandal. By sending him to the priests He meant to teach all those who assist sinners that they should not depart from the ordinary discipline, but urge penitents to conform to all the laws regarding reparation of scandal and injury done to neighbors.

On His way to Capharnaum Jesus met a Roman soldier, who was captain of a hundred men garrisoned in this town. This centurion had been an eye-witness of the miracles wrought by Christ; he therefore approached Him with the profoundest respect and confidence, requesting Him to heal his servant.

The centurian's servant is an image of a soul deprived of the grace of God. Those who saw that servant saw an unhappy man, trembling, miserable, and dying. Man without the grace of God is in a similar condition. He can do nothing good; he yields to temptations, and is deprived of

true comfort. Oh, let us pray to God that we may never be deprived of the help of His grace.

The centurion is to be admired for the charity he showed to his servant and for his great humility in confessing his unworthiness to receive Jesus into his house. Those who have servants should learn of him that they should have charity for those under them. And all Christians should learn to recognize themselves as unworthy of the favors which God is pleased to confer upon them through His merciful kindness, and not through any merit of their own.

Jesus expressed surprise at the faith of the centurion in order to attract the attention of the people who were present. This faith was indeed admirable, for the centurion was a pagan, in whom He should have expected no great faith. Christ desired to show the mercy of His Eternal Father, who gave the grace of such great faith and humility to a man educated in the army and among the Gentiles. He wished to call the attention of the Jews to their blindness in being so slow to receive the Messias whom, by reason of the prophesies and the miracles worked by Him, they should have been the first to recognize.

Christ foretells that many shall come from the East and the West, that is, Gentiles from all parts of the earth would embrace the faith and enter the Church, while the Jews who were called first, would through their want of belief and obstinacy,

be excluded and condemned. He shows us also that, though living in the bosom of the Church, we are not certain of dying therein, for if we fail in Christian perseverance, we shall be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven. Lastly, He warns us to be as persevering in the faith as Abraham, as obedient unto death as Isaac, and as full of confidence as Jacob, in the hope of the happiness of Heaven.

Next to the Immaculate Mother of God, St. Agnes is revered as the special patroness of purity. She was the daughter of wealthy parents, citizens of Rome. Her parents were no longer young when she was born, and she was their only child. She had at her disposal every luxury which wealth could command, but her tastes were so simple that she despised all finery. The parents of Agnes were pious and charitable. The greater part of their large and beautiful home had been dedicated to the service of the sick and poor. In order not to call attention to themselves, they were obliged to perform their good deeds in secret. Hence the sick were brought in after nightfall, and removed after they were cured. The poor came to receive their alms, which had been ac-

quired by the sale of the ornaments and jewels of pious Christians. In such an atmosphere as this Agnes was nurtured, with nothing to spoil or warp the natural goodness of her heart. She was adored by every member of the household, from her parents down to the humblest servant.

Even in tender childhood, Agnes was full of the fear of God and faithfully obeyed His commandments. Above all she loved purity, that most precious ornament of the Christian soul. In her tenth year she vowed herself to eternal virginity and chose to be a spouse of Christ. In angelic innocence, in prayer, and in works of charity her days passed until she was thirteen years old, when her beauty attracted the attention of the pagan tribune, Symphronius. Her lovely appearance and noble bearing so pleased the youth that he wished to become betrothed to her. To win the favor of Agnes he offered her presents of pearls and precious stones.

"Do not try to win me," Agnes said, "for I am promised to another."

The pagan youth did not dream that she spoke of Christ. He thought, instead, that the maiden was promised to some one else, and grieved so over her loss that he became ill. Then his father sent for Agnes and said to her: "My son is pining away and will die for your sake." Agnes gently answered: "Am I permitted to break the promise I gave my first Bridegroom?"

"Who," asked the tribune, "is this bridegroom to whom you have plighted your troth and whom you prefer to my son?" Agnes answered solemnly: "It is Christ." At this confession the Roman felt a delight which he at first concealed from her, for as a Christian Agnes was in his power. He took her aside and spoke kindly to her. But Agnes acted as though she did not hear. Then the tribune threatened her. "If you do not deny Christ," he said, "I shall have you tortured and burned alive."

The lictors were ordered to drag Agnes before the idols, that she might strew an offering of incense on the glowing coals, but when her hands were untied to enable her to sacrifice to the pagan gods, she made the sign of the cross instead, by that act publicly acknowledging her Christian faith.

Now the angry tribune set snares for her virtue. But Agnes knew to whom to turn in her trials and troubles. Her faith was well rewarded. An angel of God protected her innocence. Dazzling light shone about the virgin, so that all were affrighted. A youth who tried to approach her in an unbecoming way was struck dead by the angel. It was the son of Symphronius. Agnes knelt down and prayed for him, and he came back to life. He then acknowledged Christ, praised the miracle, and became a Christian himself.

After this Agnes was condemned to be burned

at the stake. But, behold! the flames did not hurt the pure Bride of Christ. They parted, and burned the people standing to the right and to the left. Finally she was put to death by the sword. Her body was destroyed, but her pure soul rose to join her heavenly Bridegroom.

The parents buried the holy child on a small estate. Many miracles glorified her tomb. Once when the parents were praying, Agnes appeared to them in heavenly beauty. She carried a lighted lamp in her hand and a lamb on her arm. Her feast comes on the twenty-first of January.

Her innocence endeared St. Agnes to Christ, as it has endeared her to His Church ever since. Even as penitents, we may imitate this innocence of hers in a certain degree. Let us strictly guard our eyes, and Christ, when He sees that we keep our hearts pure for His sake, will renew our youth and give us back the years which the canker of sin has wasted.

"He set a seal upon my face, that I might admit no love but His. He pledged my troth with the ring of faith, and adorned me with the necklace of infinite beauty. Having loved Him, I am chaste; having touched Him, I am pure; having received Him, I am a virgin."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"And behold, a great tempest arose, in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves; but He was asleep." (*St. Matthew* viii, 24.)

THE boat in which Christ rode represents the Church in the midst of the hurly-burly of the world. Jesus, on account of His promise, is ever with His disciples, the Pope, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church, as He was with His Apostles in the ship on the sea of Galilee. This should be a great consolation to us. He who keeps his mind fixed on this great truth sees what takes place in the Church in a different light than the outside world.

The ship not only represents the Church, but it also symbolizes the human soul in which Jesus Christ is present by His grace. The soul is like a ship amid angry waves; every passion threatens a storm, every pleasure a rock, and the whole course of life is like a sea full of dangers. If the soul can keep Jesus with it, the winds will cease, the tempest abate, the dangers vanish, tranquillity prevail, and the soul, laden with merit, will reach the harbor of eternal life.

To the just man the winds and tempests are

temptations, fears, anxieties, and tribulations of every kind, which God frequently permits souls dear to Him to undergo. Sufferings and tribulations are generally the lot of pious Christians. The sinners and converts from error and sin have experienced this great truth to their greater glory and for the consolations of all Christians. How bitterly the Jews hated Paul after his conversion to Christianity! They hunted him from place to place, beat him, stoned him, and cast him into prison, brought false accusations against him, and sought to take his life. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you;" are the words of Christ.

God does always nip in the bud the storms that rise up against His Church or allay the afflictions of just souls. He seems sometimes to be asleep. He permits the tempests to increase and become furious, to show us the necessity of having recourse to Him, and that we may, by our own strength, assisted by His grace, win a more glorious crown in Heaven.

As the Apostles believed themselves doomed, they hastened to awake Christ; whence we learn that in public as well as private dangers, in calamities of Church or State as well as in dangers to our souls, we should invoke Him confidently as the Apostles did, and with hearts full of love and free from the stain of sin.

Our Lord charged His Apostles with a want of

faith, because after witnessing so many miracles of mercy and love, they yielded to despondency, even though He was near. Those who fear should remember His words and learn to confide in God even though He sometimes appears to sleep. He is never far away, but protects His children with the tenderness of a father and guides them, that they may not falter.

Notwithstanding the little faith of the Apostles, Christ immediately calmed the storm; and while admiring His infinite goodness we see how a prayer, imperfect in the beginning, can lead open for us the treasures of divine mercy. Let every sinner have recourse to Jesus Christ, and he will soon see the tempest cease and find peace. Whatever God does is well done. Let us submit to His all-wise guidance and providence. Remain near Jesus, as the Apostles did, and the storms of this life will make all the sweeter the happiness which we hope for in Paradise.

Kings and subjects, rich and poor, mutually depend on each other, and it is the command of God that every one should perform consciously the part assigned to him. It is by constant attendance to all the duties of his state that a person is to be sanctified. By this means all his

ordinary actions will become sacrifices agreeable to God, and his whole life will be an unending chain of good works. That is why every state of life furnishes abundant means for attaining to sanctity and Christian perfection.

St. Veronica of Milan could boast of no worldly advantages either by birth or fortune. Her pious parents maintained their children by hard labor, in a village near Milan. Being very poor, they could not defray the expense of educating their daughter, and she never learned to read. But the fervent if simple instructions of the mother filled the heart of little Veronica with lively sentiments of virtue. The pious maid applied herself to continued prayer and was very attentive to the religious instructions she received. From her childhood she toiled hard in house and field, and cheerfully accomplished every menial task. She was most diligent and exact in her work, and so obedient to her parents and masters, so humble toward her equals, that she seemed to have no will of her own. Her food was coarse and her drink water, sometimes mixed with a little milk.

She constantly conversed with God at her work, so much so that, when in company, she seemed deaf to talk, mirth, and music. When she was weeding, reaping, or performing some other labor in the fields, she strove to work at a distance from her companions, to entertain herself the more freely with her heavenly Spouse. Her comrades

admired her love of solitude, and on coming to her, always found her cheerful, though often in tears; so carefully did Veronica conceal what passed in her soul between her and God, as she meditated on the sufferings of Jesus.

She had a great desire to become a nun in the poor, strict and edifying nunnery of St. Martha. To qualify herself for this state, being occupied the whole day with work, she sat up at night to learn to read and write. One day, when she was in great anxiety, the Mother of God, to whom she had always recommended herself, assured her in a vision that it would be enough if she knew three letters, which would teach her more than books: the first signified purity of intention; the second, aversion to complaint or criticism; the third, daily meditation on the Passion of Christ. By the first she would learn to begin her daily duties for no human motive, but for God alone. By the second, to carry out what she had thus begun by attending to her own affairs, never judging her neighbor, but praying for those who erred. By the third she would be enabled to forget her own pains and sorrows by merging them with those of the Lord, and to weep hourly and silently for the sins committed throughout the world.

After three years of patient waiting, Veronica was at last received as a lay sister into the convent of St. Martha at Milan. The community

was extremely poor, and Veronica's duty was to beg in the city for their daily food. Three years after receiving the habit she was afflicted with a prolonged illness, which caused her great pain; yet she would never consent to be relieved of any of her labors, nor did she omit any of her prayers. Her answer always was: "I must work while I have time." It was her delight to help and serve others. She always sought the last place and meanest work. It was her desire to live on bread and water. Her silence was a sign of continual prayer, meditating on the love of God and the joys of heaven. She was favored by God with many visions and comforts. She died at the hour which she had foretold, in the year 1497, the fifty-second of her age. Her feast is celebrated on the thirteenth of January. "How much is time worth?—as much as God is worth. For God is the reward of time well spent." These are the words of St. Bernardine.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field." (*St. Matthew* xiii, 24.)

JESUS CHRIST in the course of His sermon explaining the parable of the sower to His apostles, says that the sower is the Son of God, *i. e.* Himself. The field is the whole world, in which the Apostles and their successors were to sow the seed of the Gospel, that is the doctrine of Christ. For this purpose the Son of God established the holy Catholic Church, wherein is preached the word of God, which tells us what we must believe and do in order to please Him. In the Church we have the holy Sacraments, by means of which we become children of God and heirs of Heaven.

According to the explanation of the Divine Master we are to understand by the good seed the effect rather than the cause, and therefore the good seed signifies the effect of the word of God, that is the loyal Christians produced by the preaching of the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, assisted by the priests, who teach the people in their name.

The cockle represents the sinners, heretics, teachers of perverse doctrines—in a word, all bad

Christians. These are allies of the devil and destroy a great number of souls. Satan sowed cockle in the garden of Eden by seducing Eve, and will continue to sow the seed of sin until the end of time. The devil who incites sinners to evil, and all those who make themselves ministers of wickedness by scandals and perverse teachings, are the enemy who sow the cockle.

Those who, by sleeping, instead of watching, gave to the devil an opportunity to sow cockle, are all who have charge of souls, but are negligent in the performance of their duties and, wanting in vigilance and zeal, permit evil customs and ignorance to destroy the vineyard of Christ. In the same class are those parents and teachers who do not give the proper attention to their charges, but leave them exposed to danger by permitting evil customs and disorders to creep into the home, the schools, and other places of education.

Some think the servants who wished to uproot the cockle represent those over-zealous persons who wish to tolerate neither sinners nor defective Christians in the world. Others see in them the angels of the Lord, ministers of His wrath, instruments of His vengeance, death, public calamities, and all those disasters that would in a short time exterminate sinners if God in His infinite mercy did not prevent them.

History shows that God often spared kings and

whole nations on account of the innocent souls who would suffer from pestilence, war, and misfortunes of every kind. Thus the dissolute inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha would have been spared if only ten just men, like Lot, could have been found in these cities.

St. Augustine tells us that God permits sinners to live on in order to give them time to be converted, and also to give the just an occasion to exercise patience and to render themselves perfect in the midst of those who persecute them and by their conduct tempt them to sin.

The harvest time is the last day, on which the good will be separated from the wicked and all judged according to their deserts.

The angels of the Lord will separate the good from the bad, as Christ has told us. Without delay they will distinguish between them. They will favor no one. Relationship, nobility, honors, titles, learning, dress, sword, mitre, sceptre, will protect no one on that day. The just will be put on the right hand, the wicked on the left of the Judge, and each will be judged according to his works. The wheat, that is, the just, will be gathered together in the Paradise of God, and the cockle, that is, the wicked, will be cast into hell.

We should learn three things from this parable: First, to be on our guard that the devil may not sow cockle in our hearts or in the hearts of those under our care. Second, to console and sym-

pathize with poor sinners. Third, to endeavor to make ourselves wheat for Paradise and not cockle for the eternal fire.

The saints were by all odds the greatest and most famous men the world has ever known. St. Francis de Sales, for instance, enjoys greater renown than Shakespeare; for his name is known and honored and invoked by millions who never even heard of the greatest of English poets.

The mother of Saint Francis was a pious countess, who desired that her boy should grow up to be a good Christian. She took him to church with her, and also allowed him to accompany her on her visits to the sick. Thus Francis learned to love God and men. She would read to him stories from the Lives of the Saints, always pointing out the lesson to be learned from these heroic narrations. And just as boys who read of the adventures of sailors and soldiers feel a desire to imitate them, so little Francis became possessed of the wish to imitate the deeds of God's best servants.

From the time he was five years of age, Francis took great pleasure in giving alms to the poor. He often ate only half of his meal, so that he might give away the rest to the hungry beggars

who thronged to his home for food. When his supply was exhausted, he himself became a beggar for their sakes. He would go to his relatives and ask for something which he could give to the poor. So charitable did he become that he was known as "Father of the poor,"—a glorious name for such a little fellow, was it not?

Francis was very frank and honest. If he happened to break a window or a dish—and of course, being a lively boy, he did so sometimes,—he never concealed it. He preferred to be punished rather than tell an untruth. He always remembered what his mother had told him: "Never tell a lie, my son; falsehood comes from the devil, and whoever tells lies, is a child of Satan." These words had made a deep impression on his mind, and he would have exposed himself to any discomfort rather than become a servant of the devil. On this point, at least, every boy and girl should imitate him. Telling lies is one of the worst faults that make young people unlovable.

When Francis was six years old, he was sent to a school near his home, and among all the little pupils of his own age he was noted for his love of study and his piety. He made haste to learn his lessons and performed his other class duties so that he might have time left to pray. In his twelfth year he was sent to Paris to finish his studies. His mother was loath to allow him to go

away while he was still so young, and gave him many counsels.

It was a good thing for him that he obeyed the advice he had received from her, because in Paris he had to run the gauntlet of many dangers, especially the bad example of some of his schoolmates. He avoided these dangers by sticking to the resolve he had made to go nowhere but to school and church.

He went out walking with his tutor every day for his health, and they always chose some retired spot, where they could say their beads undisturbed. Francis said the beads daily all through life, and besides, like all the other saints was a devout client of Our Blessed Lady. Through her intercession he received that angelic sweetness of temper which distinguishes him among the mildest and gentlest of God's servants.

To the Blessed Virgin, too, he had recourse in all his troubles. At one time, while in Paris, he was very much discouraged and down-hearted. Sadness took possession of him, and his heart was filled with aching bitterness. One thought was always before his mind—*i. e.,* that he would surely lose his soul. He could not eat or sleep; he could only weep and moan. One day while in this deplorable condition, he went into the church of St. Stephen, and, kneeling down before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, recited the *Memorare.*

Hardly had he finished, when all his gloomy thoughts left him; joy and peace once more filled his soul, and he understood how true it is that Our Blessed Mother is "the Comforter of the Afflicted."

Francis de Sales afterwards renounced his paternal inheritance, became a priest, was made Bishop of Geneva, and converted more than seventy thousand Calvinists to the true faith. His life is another proof that "the child is father to the man;" that is, that the dispositions shown in early youth indicate the afterlife of boys and girls.

St. Francis used to say that if there was anything better or fairer on earth than gentleness, Christ would have taught it to us; yet He has given us only two lessons to learn of Him—meekness and humility of heart. You will catch more flies, the Saint used to say, with a spoonful of honey than with a hundred barrels of vinegar.

The feast of St. Francis de Sales is celebrated on the twenty-ninth of January.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed, . . . which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs and becometh a tree." (*St. Matthew* xiii, 31.)

St. Hilary tells us that by the grain of mustard-seed is meant Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is a figure of Christ by its littleness, its power of growth, and its virtues.

Though the mustard-seed is capable of great development when it is put into the ground, it is among the smallest of seeds. So Jesus Christ, though He is great, strong, and glorious by His divinity, and though He is to receive the adoration of the whole world on account of his glorious Resurrection, yet He belittled, humiliated, and annihilated Himself so as to appear weak, afflicted, a worm and not a man, an object of scorn to the Gentiles, and a stumbling-block to the multitude.

As the little seed pierces the earth, grows large, and finally affords shelter and refuge to beasts and birds, so Jesus Christ, rising and coming forth from the sepulchre, triumphed in the midst of human generations, and received under the shadow of the cross not only the ignorant and lowly, but

also the wise and great; not only the sinners who came to take refuge at His feet, but also the just, who, flying as the eagle on high, find in Him a place of refuge, a source of strength and nourishment, on the difficult way to evangelical perfection.

The mustard-seed is regarded as a strong excitant, an agreeable condiment and a powerful medicine. In like manner Jesus Christ by His doctrines aroused the people from the stupor of their passions; by His example He made sweet and light all duties, however painful or difficult, and by His grace He healed all our infirmities and preserved the health and life of our souls.

The Church also is symbolized by the mustard-seed. In the beginning the Church was composed of but few persons, the Apostles, the disciples, and five hundred others, who, as St. Peter tells us, had seen the Redeemer after His Resurrection. But this Church, so small at first, spread with wonderful rapidity throughout the whole world, and in it millions of men found comfort, repose, and consolation.

In the second parable contained in to-day's Gospel, according to St. Augustine, the woman is a figure of the Church, the leaven is the preaching of the Apostles, and the fermentation is that change of the mind, the will, and the affections which is produced in men by the Gospel.

The grain of mustard-seed teaches us a lesson.

This little grain develops into a plant and gives refuge and shelter to bird and beast, teaches us how great an increase a little virtue is capable of when kept and nourished in the heart by faithful compliance with grace. And the little leaven which sours the meal shows the ruin which one single vice may produce in the body and mind of youth when not repressed in the beginning.

That Our Redeemer spoke in parables to the multitude is a singular proof of His divine mission. The Royal Prophet had said, in the seventy-seventh psalm, that the coming Messias would speak in parables, and through them reveal truths hidden from the eyes of the world; and therefore the Divine Master, even in this particular, gave a sign by which He could be recognized when He taught the multitude in parables.

From all that has been said we should understand, in the first place, that the triumphs of the Gospel are not the work of chance, or of men, but of God. In the second place, we should rejoice that we are now no longer instructed by shadows and figures, difficult to understand, but in a manner clear and evident. Lastly, we should see to it that the germs of faith should grow strong in our intellect, engraft themselves in our will, bloom in the affections of our heart, and bring forth the fruit of good works.

On March the fourth we honor a real boy saint. Casimir was the son of a Polish king. His pious mother, Elizabeth of Austria, together with learned and God-fearing instructors, cultivated his heart and turned his soul to God. His innocence and piety soon ripened into heroic virtue. He showed an open mind to all good teachings and sound advice. As a flower turns to the sun, so his heart and soul turned to God.

From his earliest childhood Casimir delighted in prayer. He could not look upon a crucifix without tears. He was especially devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. To her care he recommended his soul. His purity was angelic. Once when he overheard a lewd word he fainted. In his tender youth he vowed himself to chastity, and kept this vow faithfully until death. He consecrated the flower of his age to the exercises of devotion and penance, and had a horror of that softness and splendor which reign in courts. Under his clothes, which were of the plainest, he wore a rough hair-shirt. He preferred to be with Jesus and to serve Him in prayer, in self-denial, in mortifications, in charity. At night he scorned a soft bed and slept on the hard floor. He arose early in the morning and, having said his prayers, hastened to Mass. If he found the church locked, he honored the House of God by kissing the door. Often the sexton found him kneeling on the hard

stones before the church. At Mass he was filled with such devotion that those who beheld him felt as if they were looking at an angel. After the Holy Sacrifice he remained in the church so long in prayer that his parents sometimes sent messengers to call him to meals.

By always living in the presence of God, he remained united to his Creator, showed a constant cheerfulness of temper, and was mild and affable to all. He respected the minutest ceremonies of the Church: whatever tended to promote piety was dear to him. He had a particular devotion to the Passion of Our Blessed Lord. As a mark of his singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin he composed a hymn of which a copy was buried with him at his request.

He looked upon the tempting food of the royal table without desire. Indeed, he ate so little that his life was one continual fast. "The Kingdom of God, is not food and drink," he said. He guarded against loud talking and gossip. When he had to speak he did so with a gentle voice and becoming modesty.

Pride and vanity had no place in his soul. His love for Jesus showed itself particularly in his treatment of the poor and suffering. He looked upon them as his brothers, permitted them to come into the royal palace, and gave them alms. When the courtiers shook their heads and said:

"Such companions are not fit for a prince," Casimir answered: "I know no greater honor than to serve Jesus and His poor."

Grown to manhood, Casimir found more pleasure in visiting our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament than in dancing, playing, and hunting. He often rose in the middle of the night to pray in the chapel.

He might have been king of Hungary, but as it would have meant to hold the crown against an enemy, Casimir declined the offer, saying: "I do not want a crown that is stained by the blood of my subjects."

Having been wasted with lingering consumption, he foretold his last hour, and prepared himself for it by redoubling his exercises of piety. After receiving the last Sacraments he died a happy death, on the fourth of March, 1482, at the age of twenty-three years. His corpse was buried in the church of St. Stanislas. Many miracles were wrought through his intercession. His body and all the rich cloths it was wrapped in, were found quite entire, and sent forth a sweet smell one hundred and twenty years after his death, in spite of the excessive moisture of the vault. St. Casimir is the Patron of Poland, and is proposed to the young of all nations as a particular pattern of purity.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard." (*St. Matthew* xx, 1.)

THE householder is Almighty God. In the vineyard the Fathers recognize the Church of Jesus Christ; and the wages symbolize the glories of Paradise, which are promised as a reward to all those who devote themselves to the profession and practice of the Gospel.

This parable can be explained in two ways. It may be applied to man in general or to each individual Christian in particular.

Applied to humanity in general it means that the early morning signifies the time from Adam to Noe; the third hour, the period from Abraham to Moses; the ninth hour, the era from Moses to Christ; the eleventh hour the time from Christ to the end of the world; and the evening, the great day of judgment.

From the beginning of the world, that is, the morning and the third, sixth, and ninth hours, God, by the voice and example of the Patriarchs, by His written law, and by the words of the Prophets, called men, particularly the Hebrews,

to believe in Christ, to hope for His coming, and to unite themselves with Him by leading a holy life. At the eleventh hour, by the preaching of Christ, of His Apostles and their successors, God has called, calls, and will continue to call men to enter into the Catholic Church, to become living members of the mystical body of Christ, and to serve Him faithfully by observing His laws. In the evening, that is on the day of the General Judgment, all those who belonged to the Chuch of Christ, who entered the Church (the vineyard) in the early morning, at the third, sixth, ninth, or eleventh hour, will receive without distinction, as a reward of their labors, eternal life and the glory of Paradise.

This parable can also be applied to each Christian in particular. The early morning is childhood; the third hour, youth; the sixth hour, manhood; the ninth hour, old age; the eleventh hour, the last days of life, the last sickness. Through Baptism and Christian instruction we are called to work in the vineyard of the Lord. Many are called in youth, some in manhood, others in old age, and many at the end of life, after having traveled the way of sin and iniquity. All who have served God will receive the glories of Paradise as a reward.

At the last hour a sincere repentance, an act of perfect charity, a lively desire, a firm purpose of faithful service should life be prolonged, will be

accepted by a merciful God as sufficient to merit eternal reward. It was in this way that the penitent thief heard the answer to his prayer: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

It would be foolish and impious to delay to work for God till the last hour. God has no need of us, He is not obliged to call us. He may call us to-day; He may call us to-morrow; but he who does not hear His voice one day exposes himself to the danger of being rejected another day.

The householder was free to give to the last comers the same wages as He had promised those who had worked all day. There was no injustice, as a formal agreement had been made. He was fair to all, though more generous to the late comers.

Service in the vineyard of the Lord is measured not solely by duration of time, but by fervor, fidelity, a right intention, and, above all, by the intensity of the love with which it is performed. On this account a true penitent can in a short time surpass those who have been more or less lukewarm during their whole lives. Observe also that in Heaven there are different crowns, and while all enjoy the happiness of Paradise, those who have served with greater merit are rewarded with a greater degree of glory.

The Jews were the first who were called to enter the Church of Christ, but on account of their stubbornness they were excluded and are now the

last. The gentiles, on the other hand, were called last, but embraced the faith willingly and entered the Church of Jesus Christ without delay. We who are called to serve God from infancy should be careful not to be the last by deferring conversion to our old age.

"Many are called, but few are chosen," simply means that many through Baptism enter into the vineyard to labor and gain eternal reward, but few observe the law faithfully and serve God with perseverance until death. Only the innocent and truly penitent, who have persevered to the last, will be chosen. We must remember that without the grace of God we can do nothing toward our own salvation. Let us live in fear and humility; trust to the divine mercy; pray in the name of Jesus, and the terrible sentence of condemnation will not fall upon us.

My hero to-day is a Saint whose feast is kept on March the twenty-third, a Spaniard of noble birth, who became an archbishop and a missionary in South America. Alphonsus Turibius from his infancy showed a strong inclination to piety. In childhood it was his delight to erect and adorn altars and to serve the poor. He trembled at the very shadow of sin. Once a pedlar woman got

angry and flew into a passion because she had lost something out of her pack. Alphonsus was upset to see her offend God so easily. He went to his mother, and begged her for money to replace what the poor woman had lost. He was very devoted to the Blessed Virgin, recited her Office and Rosary daily, and fasted every Saturday in her honor.

At school he usually gave part of his meager lunch to the poor, and was so much addicted to fasting that his superiors had to compel him to reduce his penances. The boy studied hard and made great progress in knowledge. He attended the Universities of Valladolid and Salamanca, and after he was grown up, was made Judge of Granada by Philip II, who loved him dearly.

But Turibius was not destined to try civil offences all his life. The Archbishop of Lima died, and there was no one to fill the post. Philip II, looked round among his prelates and courtiers, but only one man seemed to him fit for the task of assuming the direction of that important diocese. And this one was a layman, who had no orders of any kind. But he was holy, and loved prayer; he was mortified, and sought the glory of God and the good of souls. The King designated Alphonsus Turibius, and, after receiving minor orders and the priesthood, was consecrated archbishop of Lima. He reached Peru when he was forty-three years of age, and had to begin his life anew,

amidst unknown people speaking unknown tongues. It required a big, brave heart to set to work in such a new and difficult field; but the Saints have brave hearts, and Alphonsus was a Saint.

His diocese was scattered over the most rugged mountains in the world. The people lived in huts perched high upon the rocks, or on the borders of impenetrable forests, or beside wide-spreading marshes. Any day you might have seen the Archbishop crawling on hands and knees over some big rocks to reach some sick peasant in a cottage, or swimming a river to get to a lonely hut. Nothing frightened the bishop; he confronted wild animals and wilder tribes; he fought for the poor degraded natives against their worst enemy, the wicked white man. For their sakes he brought down upon himself the hatred of the Spanish settlers, who for the most part thought only of gain, and cared nothing for the souls of the natives. They used to sell liquor to these poor creatures, who would become intoxicated and barter away their gold and precious jewels to get more of the fiery liquid. By the exercise of much patience, love, and hope the holy Bishop brought about a wonderful change in his diocese. He built churches, monasteries, and hospitals. He left no place untrodden, no poor creature unconsoled.

Perhaps you think that such a man was praised

wherever he went, but this was not at all the case. Turibius had to remind great men of their faults; he had to show them that he could not allow scandals to go unrebuked; he had to be severe when severity was necessary. The wicked could not bear that, so they turned round upon him, and slandered his character; but the saintly Archbishop bore all this persecution sweetly, and freely forgave his enemies.

Some of the people could not understand Spanish, Turibius, though quite old, courageously set to work to learn their languages.

Turibius died like a Saint and a hero. He went to the church to receive the Holy Viaticum. On his death-bed he said over and over again how ardently he desired to be with Christ. And when he knew for certain that he was dying, he cried out: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!"

In the Church Calendar we find the feast of St. Turibius on the twenty-third of March.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

"Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear let him hear. . . . To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables." (*St. Luke* viii, 8–10.)

Our Divine Lord felt that comparatively few of those who came to hear Him would profit by His teaching. In order to believe in Jesus Christ, to hear His words, and to understand the meaning of His wonderful deeds, the divine gift of grace was first of all necessary. Even St. Peter could not have recognized in Him the Son of the living God had it not been revealed to him. Besides grace there is necessary also a docile heart, a sincere mind, and a great desire to be informed on all the things necessary for salvation. Now, among the number that gathered about Our Lord to hear His words and witness His miracles, there were but few who had these necessary dispositions. On the contrary, many opposed Him and refused to accept the proofs He continually gave of His mission and His divine nature. When, therefore, He said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," He meant that he who is faithful to the grace he receives, and hears Him with a sincere mind and upright heart, would understand the

meaning of His parables and the force of His words.

The statement that they might not understand Him, according to St. Matthew, meant, not that Christ spoke in parables so that they might not understand Him, but that many who saw the wonders worked by Him and heard His words, did not understand the meaning of His teaching because of their bad motives and blind passions. Observe that the merit of the Christian believer depends on faith. Christ submits to our understanding abundant motives to win belief, and all those who yielded to divine grace heard Him willingly and believed His words. Those who permitted themselves to be misled by Satan rejected them. Jesus, then, did not speak in parables that He might not be understood; but the Jews, blinded by their passions, did not wish to understand the meaning of His words.

The seed is the word of God, as contained in the teachings of the Gospel, and the sower is Jesus Christ, who once in person sowed the seed of holiness, and who continues to sow it to the end of time by means of His ministers, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church.

The road, the rock, the thorns, and the good ground, signify different kinds of Christians, who, because of divers inclinations, hear the divine word with greater or less benefit or no benefit at all.

The seed by the wayside signifies the word of God preached to those who open their hearts to vice. The vices which rule in their hearts, like travellers who come and go, render fruitless the great truths announced to them. As the seed along the wayside is destroyed by the birds, so the remembrance of the divine word, received from the lips of the minister of God, is plucked out from their hearts by the agents of the devil.

The seed that falls on the rocks is the word of God heard by Christians who try to serve two masters. They hear the word and, recognizing their evil ways, resolve to do better, but when their favorite passion reasserts itself, they fall back to sin. As these sinners have not the love of God in their hearts, the seed of the divine word withers under the heat and fire of their passions.

The seed that falls among thorns is the word of God when heard by a person who nourishes in his heart a mixture of good and evil motives. Let us take, for example, a man who is active in attending to his religious duties, but in business transactions is governed by greed; or a woman who loves prayer and is charitable toward others, but harbors vain ambitions, and undue fondness for dress and show. The first lets the word of God grow in his heart as long as it does contravene his interests; but an unjust gain finally destroys every good germ. The second, on the occasion of a ball, or a too free conversation, for-

gets God and thereby destroys the good seed which grew in her heart. Christians of this kind are unfortunately most numerous in the world.

By good ground, *i. e.*, fertile soil, says St. Thomas, is meant the good conscience and true heart of the just man, who hears the divine word willingly and with a desire to profit by it, keeps it in his memory, reflects upon it, and at the proper time recalls it in order to avoid sin and to gain supernatural merits.

From this Gospel we should learn first of all to discover our defects and ask God to grant us the grace and help necessary to amend our lives. Secondly, we should try to make our hearts good ground, in order that the seed of the divine word may flourish and bear fruit therein. To do this we should hear the word of God as frequently as possible and with a sincere desire to be instructed, corrected, improved, and sanctified. For this reason we should listen to the priest with faith, humility, devotion, and attention. And after having heard the divine word we should make it our business to obey it, and to render to God the fruit of good works.

Once there was a very holy man, whose name was SERAPION. He was nicknamed "Sindonite,"

because he wore only one garment, a coarse linen tunic. He lived in Egypt, but travelled through many countries to learn how to serve God best. The ruling passion of his life was to give. Many people think of nothing but saving. You all know what that means. A man who saves and never spends a nickel unless he has to, is called a "miser," and misers are very disagreeable, both to themselves and to others.

Serapion's passion was giving, as I said before. I call it a passion, because he gave away everything he had; not material things only, but a hundred times more than that: he *sold himself* and gave the money to the poor. Greater love than this no man can have for another; for when Serapion had sold himself, he was a *slave,*—a man who belongs to and works for another. The man to whom Serapion sold himself first was a comedian, and an idolater; so the Saint set himself to convert his master and managed so well that he and his whole family became Christians. When they were baptized, they gave Serapion his liberty, for they looked upon him as their greatest benefactor.

So the slave was free again. One day he met a widow who was in great trouble; her little children were starving and she could get neither work nor food. Serapion's heart was touched with sorrow. He went to the slave-market and again sold himself. The twenty pieces of silver which

he received he gave to the poor woman to buy herself and her little ones bread. This time he found a good master, a man who was kind to all men, even to his slaves. He loved Serapion, watched him at prayer and at meals, and liked to hear him talk of his God. Bit by bit his mind was enlightened, and at last he, too, became a Christian. Serapion was again set free, this time with presents—an undergarment, a cloak, and, what was most precious, a book of the Gospels. In those days books were worth more than their weight in gold, because they had to be written by hand.

The Saint was now quite rich: he was well clad, had a precious volume, and the means of gaining a livelihood. But before long he met a beggar who was badly dressed. Serapion took off his cloak and handed it to the poor man. A little further on he came across an unfortunate creature who was only one-half covered. He gave him his new undergarment and went on his way happily. One of his friends met him, and asked what had become of his clothes. Serapion pointed to the book he still held, and told him he heard a Voice coming from it saying: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor." And as he continued his journey, he said to himself: *"Sell all that thou hast!"* Then Serapion took the book he held so dear and sold it for the benefit of the poor. Now he was once more "the Sindonite," for he had only one linen garment.

It is beyond counting how often the Saint sold himself for a slave. He went in and out of the slave-market until he was too old to be of much use. Then he went into the desert and, living all alone, gave himself up to prayer for the rest of his days. At sixty God took him to Heaven to reward him for all he had done for His poor. His feast comes on March the twenty-first.

You know what Our Lord promised those who give freely to His little ones. He never allows Himself to be outdone in generosity. If we give, He gives. I know a lady who has a purse set aside for the poor. She never refuses any petition, yet that purse is never empty. It comes very near to being at times, but never is quite empty. If she did not give so freely, it would often be empty. This is not human, but supernatural logic.

A beautiful lesson in the words of St. Augustine: "But where, sayest thou, can I find Christ on earth? Where can I find Him, that I may give to Him? Give alms on earth, and thou hast fed Christ in Heaven."

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

"Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. . . . When He drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside." (*St. Luke* xviii, 31, 35.)

Jesus made this prediction when He was about to depart from the city of Ephrem, whence, after calling Lazarus back to life, and wishing to escape the envy of the Pharisees, He went for the last time to Jerusalem to begin His bitter Passion. He went because it was the will of His Eternal Father, because it was the object of His mission on earth, and because He desired to sacrifice His life for the salvation of mankind.

He foretold His sufferings to the Apostles in order that they might know that He was truly the Son of God, for God alone can know future events which depend on free causes. He also wanted to show them that if He submitted to suffering and death, He did so of His own free will, and that they might not be scandalized by His humiliations, nor waver in their faith. And finally He foretold these things that they might learn of Him to bear courageously the sufferings and the martyrdom which they were to undergo.

The truth of this prophecy should strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ as true God, and our belief that He suffered death because He willed to die for love for us. We might learn from Him to bear courageously the tribulations and crosses which Divine Providence, always just and kind, has prepared for us.

St. Gregory says that the blind man sitting by the wayside was a figure of two things. In general, he represented the whole human race; in particular, he was a figure of those Christians who, blinded by the things of this world, do not see the value of heavenly things.

Consider this blind man attentively. He was outside the city; he did not see the rags that covered him; he did not see the dangers about him: he was helpless and depended entirely on the assistance of those he met on the road. Such is the human race. Through the sin of Adam it was placed outside the way of Paradise; blinded in intellect, it sees not its own misery, nor the light of truth, nor the gulf open before it by ignorance, passion, and its own fallen nature. Human nature was powerless to repair its misfortunes, it could only hope for salvation from the Eternal Word. Jesus Christ came upon earth, clothed in human flesh, to redeem it by His infinite merits and by the power of His grace. Lifting human nature up He enabled it to see God, to see itself, and to see all things necessary for its salvation.

The blind man also symbolizes those Christians who are blinded by the things of this world. The blind man saw neither the magnificence of his country, nor the road that leads to it, nor the face of anyone from whom he could ask assistance. It is the same with Christians who are blinded by earthly things. They find themselves in the bosom of the Church, but see not its beauties; they are on the road to Heaven, but cannot advance one step; they wish for happiness, but know not the vanity, the emptiness of riches, honors, and power, from which they hope for it in vain.

We should learn from this blind man never to let a favorable opportunity pass nor delay a single moment to implore God when He offers His grace to heal our souls. Besides, we should learn to make ourselves heard through prayer, short ejaculations, and by the voice of the priest. When our salvation is at stake we should pay no regard to human respect or the arguments of bad companions, or to what the world may say. The greater the obstacles which we must overcome, the greater should be our fervor in invoking the divine assistance.

The blind man in appealing to Christ as Son of David, gave signs of great faith, because he thus confessed Him to be the expected Messias, capable of curing him if He so willed; and by appealing to His pity, he gave proof of his confidence that Jesus by His omnipotence and His charity

would heal him. We learn from this miracle to confide in the divine mercy, and to be persuaded that, however great our spiritual blindness may be, God will give us grace if we ask Him for it with confidence.

The year 1226 witnessed the birth of one of the greatest theologians the world has ever known. This was St. Thomas, surnamed Aquinas from the name of the castle where his parents usually resided.

In the lives of many distinguished men we read that some remarkable event occurred at or before their birth, symbolizing the prominence they were afterwards to attain. Before the birth of Thomas a venerable old man, whom every one looked upon as a saint, one day called on Theodora, Thomas's mother and said to her: "Countess, rejoice, God will give you a son who will surpass all men of his time in knowledge and sanctity. Give him the name of Thomas, which signifies profoundness."

There was reason to believe, even from the child's earliest years, that God watched over Thomas with especial care. One day, while he and his sister were playing in the tower of the castle, the tower was struck by lightning. The

sister fell dead at his feet, but Thomas escaped without injury. On one occasion, as his mother was taking a walk with some other ladies, and the governess followed with Thomas, she noticed that the boy held a piece of paper in his hand. She did not know where he got it, and tried to take it from him; but he refused to let her have it, and began to cry. The governess did not insist, but told the Countess about it. On returning to the castle, his mother, in her turn, tried to obtain possession of the paper, but Thomas still resisted. It was the only time he was ever known to disobey. The Countess naturally desired to find out why he set such store by the paper, and so opened his hand by force and took it from him. What was her surprise to see written on it only these words: "Ave Maria"—Hail Mary. Love for the Blessed Virgin was the ruling sentiment of his heart.

From the time that Thomas was able to speak, he astonished everybody by his intelligence. His was not the cleverness of children whose pranks are mistaken by indulgent parents for smartness; he was intelligent in the real meaning of the word. His talk was full of good sense, and his conduct was always becoming.

When he was five years old, Thomas was sent to school at the celebrated Benedictine monastery of Monte Casino. There he remained five years, astonishing his teachers by his brightness and

rapid progress. Never had they had a pupil so remarkable in every respect. He loved silence and solitude more than is customary among boys, but was never sullen or morose. Although by far the brightest of his class, he never looked down upon the dunces or laughed at their blunders. On the contrary, he felt sorry for them. In this he differed from a good many bright boys nowadays, who seem to think that if God has given them more talent than some of their companions, they have reason to be proud and to tantalize their slower classmates. Thomas was as modest as if he had been the dullest boy in school, instead of the brightest. Among many other good qualities that he possessed was a love of work. He hated to be idle; and when his lesson and class exercises were finished, he would go for a walk, and then repair to church to pray.

By the time he was ten years old Thomas had advanced so far in knowledge and virtue that the Abbot of Monte Casino persuaded his father to send the young scholar to a higher school. In consequence, Thomas went to Naples to continue his studies at the university there. Like all large cities Naples was full of dangers for young people. Some of Thomas's fellow-students were giddy and dissipated young men, who told him that he ought to have a good time, and spend his money in procuring pleasures for himself.

"That is just what I do," he answered; "my greatest pleasure is to assist the poor."

He passed unscathed through all the dangers that beset his path, and at the age of seventeen entered the Dominican Order. He became a great preacher and a still greater writer. The extent and character of his knowledge earned for him the name of "Angel of the Schools." It was he who composed the Office and the Mass of the Blessed Sacrament; and every time we are present at Benediction, we hear parts of hymns he wrote—the *O Salutaris* and *Tantum Ergo.*

St. Thomas is a great model for all school boys; they should pray to him so that they may not only succeed in their studies, but become obedient, kindly, industrious, and good.

One thing St. Thomas said which we ought particularly to bear in mind: "I cannot understand how a man can ever smile who is in the state of mortal sin."

His feast is celebrated on March the seventh.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

"Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil." (*St. Matthew* iv, 1.)

When Jesus began His public life, the Spirit, *i. e.*, the Holy Ghost, led Him into the desert. The same Holy Ghost inspires Christians to be faithful to the grace of Baptism, to flee the world, to do penance, and to find happiness in prayer and in communion with God.

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert to display His victory over Satan. The Redeemer had come to repair the disgrace of the human race, and it was necessary that the evil spirit should himself be vanquished by man in the person of Christ. It was, therefore, proper, says St. Gregory, that the Word made flesh should go to attack our enemy, and, fighting as one of us, triumph for us.

Christ in permitting the evil spirit to assail Him, meant to teach us, His followers, not to lose courage when we are assailed by temptations, for as long as we do not yield to them, they can not defile the soul, but are an occasion of glory. He also wished to teach us how to overcome the devil. He wished, as St. Augustine says, to render our victories easy for us by His own victory. By

overcoming temptations we advance in virtue and gain greater graces and rewards.

By His fast Christ sanctified our fasts, self-denials, and acts of temperance, if we practice them in a true spirit of penance. His example renders it easy for us to bear those sufferings by which we are to conquer the rebellion of the flesh.

That Christ was hungry indicates that He was a true man. The devil, taking advantage of His hunger, asked Him to change stones into bread. Christ answered that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. This answer teaches us to put our confidence in God in all our necessities. He will provide for all our wants. How many anxieties would we not avoid if in our troubles we would put our confidence in God. Let us, then, live the life of the just and remember that no just man has ever been forsaken by God.

We should never tempt God. Christ showed this in His answer to the second temptation. He could have come down from the pinnacle of the temple by the ordinary way, and it was tempting God to expect Him to work the miracle which the devil suggested. Thus also do we tempt God when we ask for miracles in confirmation of our religion, as faith is sufficient for us. We also tempt God when we ask to be cured of sickness by a miracle when we can be cured by ordinary means. We tempt God when we expect Him to

preserve us from sin while we needlessly place ourselves in the proximate occasion of sin.

The devil promised Christ all the kingdoms of the earth if, falling down, He would adore him, Christ by putting him to flight taught us that we must renounce all things rather than fail to honor God. If we miss Mass wilfully on a holy day of obligation, we fail to honor God. If we are uncharitable towards our neighbor in word and deed, we fail to honor God. We fail in our duty to God if we seek the friendship of the great and powerful in preferring temporal advantages to Him. Let us learn from Jesus that, come what may, we must never be disobedient or wanting in respect to the awful majesty of the Lord.

The angels who came to serve Jesus teach us how God treats those who, in the hour of temptation, make good use of His grace and remain faithful to Him. Joseph of Egypt remained faithful when tempted, and was put into prison, but afterwards became viceroy of Egypt. Susanna remained faithful and suffered the agonies of death; but Daniel made her innocence known to all. The three children of Babylon remained faithful and an angel rescued them from the fiery furnace. Let us remain faithful in the time of temptation, and the peace, happiness, and blessings we shall enjoy will be so many invisible angels which the Lord will send to comfort and console us after the battle is over.

There is no Saint in the calendar whose festival is more universally observed, although it occurs in Lent, than St. Patrick, whose feast falls on the seventeenth of March.

St. Patrick is the patron Saint of Ireland, and almost all American children who live in cities are familiar with the observance of this day.

The warm-hearted Irish emigrant may have but little that he can transplant to his new home beyond the sea, but he can bring with him his love for St. Patrick, and can remember, when his feast day comes round, to march with music and banners to do him honor.

St. Patrick was the son of Christian parents, and even in his babyhood his pious mother taught him the beauty and worth of the Christian religion. As he grew up, his time was given up to penance and prayer. The Psalms of David and the most beautiful hymns of the Church formed his daily petitions.

The inhabitants of Ireland, at that time had a reputation for daring pirate raids, and during one of these expeditions the little Patrick was captured and sold to Milcho, a harsh, tyrannical man, who made him tend sheep on the hills of Antrim.

God permitted this trouble to fall upon him in order to inure him to hardships and to enable him to learn the language in which he was to convey the truths of the Gospel to the Irish nation. In his confession he gives an account of the use he made of his time in captivity.

"I was always careful," he says, "to lead my flocks to pasture, and prayed fervently during the day; I became firm in the belief, fear, and love of God, and prayed at least a hundred times a day, and as often during the night. When I staid in the forests and mountains, I said my prayers before daylight, and never experienced, either in frost, snow, or rain, that negligence which I now feel, as I was then fired with the spirit of God."

And thus in the solitude of his vigils, stretched beneath the drooping branches of a tree or sheltered by an overhanging rock when storms swept through the fastnesses of the hills, Patrick heard God speak to his soul. One night in his sleep he heard a voice which told him that the hour of his deliverance was at hand. Inspired by the vision, the boy took flight, and walked nearly two hundred miles, until he arrived at a ship, of which the angelic voice had spoken. Rejoicing at regaining his freedom and at the thought of being again united to his parents, he boarded the vessel and asked the captain if he would be permitted to sail on her. But the captain was very sulky and shouted, "Do not try to come with us." Patrick

went ashore, feeling very sad. He at once began to pray, and before he had finished, he heard some one saying: "Hurry back, these men want you." He returned at once to the ship, and was surprised to see the captain smiling at him: "Come, we receive you in good faith." Patrick thanked God for hearing his prayer, but he did not trust the captain, who was not a Christian.

After three day's sailing they reached land; but the captain, unfamiliar with the coast, anchored in a wild region. For twenty-seven days they wandered about without any food except the few provisions they had taken from the ship. At length they said to Patrick, who lost no opportunity to speak to them of God: "Why not pray for relief? If God is so good, He will hear thee and send us help." Patrick prayed, and very soon after they met a herd of swine. They killed one, cooked, and ate it.

Having seen this miracle, they gave thanks to God, and Patrick was highly honored by them. After reaching his native place, Patrick hastened to the home of his parents, and great was their surprise and delight when they saw again the son whom they had mourned as dead. He made known to his father and mother his wish to study for the priesthood and to return to Ireland as an apostle of Christ.

His uncle Saint Martin of Tours promoted him to the priesthood. Later Pope Celestine conse-

crated him bishop and commissioned him to preach the Word of God in Ireland.

When St. Patrick landed in Ireland, the country was a heathen one; but he preached the Word of God so successfully that the Irish embraced the Christian religion and from that time until now Ireland has proved herself to be one of the most faithful Catholic countries in the world.

At the approach of Lent it was the custom of Saint Patrick to retire to a high mountain, where, tradition says, he spent the forty days without taking food. It is said that once, while staying on this mountain, he called together all the poisonous snakes and ordered them to depart into the sea; they obeyed him, and ever since Ireland has been free from noxious reptiles.

St. Patrick had commissioned a nun to make his shroud. When he arrived in the monastery of Saul, he found it awaiting him; he lay down and, after having received the Last Sacraments, lifted up his eyes and gave up his pure soul to God.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

"Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart." (*St. Matthew* xvii, 1, 9.)

It is generally believed that this wonderful event took place on Mount Thabor, which is near the town of Nazareth. From its summit one can see almost the whole of Palestine: to the east, the river Jordan and the country beyond; to the south, the tribes of Issachar and Manasses; to the west, the Mediterranean Sea; and to the north, a sweep of land reaching to the mountains of Lebanon.

Christ wished that His transfiguration should take place on a mountain and in a solitary place, to give us to understand that divine favors are reserved for those who, by their virtues, raise themselves above all earthly things, retire into solitude, and flee from the distractions and cares of the world. St. Peter represents those who are steadfast in their faith, St. James those who control their passions, St. John those who are chaste and pure.

Moses and Elias appeared to them on Mount Thabor. Moses was the promulgator of the law

which God gave on Mount Sinai; Elias was considered by all as the Prince of the Prophets. The Mosaic law prepared the way for the promised Messias. All the predictions of the Prophets pointed to Jesus Christ. In view of these facts you can easily see why Our Lord caused Moses and Elias to appear on either side of Him, in order that the Apostles could see how the figures of the Law and the predictions of the Prophets were to be realized in Him.

The magnificence of the vision, the joy of soul and satisfaction of heart affected Peter to such a degree that, forgetting that he was a man subject to death, and desiring nothing more, he desired to remain there forever. If a single ray of the glory of Christ could cause such profound emotions in St. Peter, what will our joy be when, at the Resurrection, we shall arise immortal and see Him in the fullness of His majesty.

In the bright cloud, as in the Baptism of Christ, the Blessed Trinity manifested itself. The Eternal Father spoke, the Divine Word was present in the person of Christ, and the Holy Ghost appeared in the semblance of a bright cloud, as He appeared in the form of a dove at the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan. In contemplating this cloud that surrounded Christ, Moses, Elias, the Apostles, and the mountain, let us remember that the Holy Spirit animates, governs, and sanctifies the whole Church of Christ.

The voice was that of the Eternal Father, for He alone could say: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." St. Leo the Great says that by these words the Eternal Father wished to proclaim to the whole world: "This is My beloved Son, not adopted, but My own, not created, but generated; this is My Son, by whom all things were made; in Him I am well pleased; whose words bear witness to Me, whose humility glorifies Me. Hear ye Him, because He is the Truth and the Way. He is My wisdom, He who was foretold by the Prophets and who redeemed the world by His blood. He opens the way and by His Cross gives us the means to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. How unfortunate we shall be if we do not listen to Him, the only Teacher of truth and Giver of life everlasting!"

It was quite natural that the Apostles should have been awed by the unexpected voice of God, and we should in no way be surprised at it. We have reason, however, to be astonished that so many Christians are not frightened at hearing the threats of the same God against those who do not follow the teaching and the law of Jesus Christ.

St. Jerome gives the reason why Our Blessed Redeemer forbade the Apostles to speak of what they had seen. He says that this event was so great and wonderful that none would have believed it if the Apostles had told them of it, and

the ignorant would have been greatly scandalized. The proper time to publish so wonderful an event was after the Resurrection, for then those who saw Him raised from the dead would have no difficulty in confessing Him to be the true God. Besides, to witness that glorious vision was a special privilege granted to the three Apostles alone, and Christ forbade them to speak of it, so that they might learn to hide from others the special favors they had received, in order not to expose themselves to vainglory and perhaps to the envy of others. When God grants us favors, let us be thankful for them and correspond with them, but let us hide them in the inmost recesses of our hearts.

On the nineteenth of March the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus Christ and the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We know very little of the life of St. Joseph. It was a hidden life, and hidden lives are often holy. At the same time we know he was a "just man," which means that he was as perfect as any one can be in this world.

St. Joseph belonged to the royal family of David. He was a tradesman, a carpenter, earn-

ing his bread by the sweat of his brow. Whether rich or poor, it was the custom among the Jews for every man to learn a trade. St. Joseph was poor, for our Lord wished to set an example of poverty, and so He chose for His foster-father a man whose hands were hard from toil.

It is at Nazareth that we first meet St. Joseph. It was, and still is, an obscure town of Galilee. Here Mary and Joseph dwelt in peace and love. They went from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled. In Judea's hills there are many small caves, often used as stables for cattle, and in one of them Mary and Joseph found shelter for the night. Here, at midnight, Jesus was born. What a labor of love it must have been for Joseph to watch over the Child and His Mother!

There are many lessons to be learned from the life of St. Joseph. He was poor, and God loves the poor. He was humble, and to be humble is to possess the greatest of virtues. He had much to suffer both in body and mind during the time he lived on earth. His days were a mixture of fear and joy:—fear lest something should befall his treasures,—joy because he had been chosen to shelter the Saviour under his roof.

He is the patron of a happy death because he lived so that he could not help but die well, and he died in the arms of Jesus and Mary. The history of the Church shows many wonderful

favors obtained through St. Joseph, who is always ready to befriend his clients.

Two little children, who had been taught by their good mother to love St. Joseph, and who lived on the borders of a forest where their father worked as a woodcutter, once begged to be allowed to take his dinner to him, as their baby brother was ill and the mother did not like to leave him. There were several paths leading through the forest. "My dear children," said the good woman, "take the basket between you, as it is heavy, and go straight on until you come to the big oak that was struck by lightning; from that place you can easily hear the stroke of your father's ax. Follow the sound and you will soon find him. May Jesus, Mary, and Joseph protect you."

Full of joy at being permitted to go on this errand, the children started. For some distance all went well. They kept to the path, laughing and singing. When they came to the old oak tree, they put the basket on the ground, for they had begun to feel tired. All was still. It was the noon hour, and even the birds seemed to be resting.

The children turned to the right and then to the left, but heard no sound. They were afraid to go out of sight of the oak lest they should lose their way.

"We cannot stay here," said the boy, at length.

"Papa will be hungry, and his dinner will be cold."

"But what shall we do?" answered the girl; "we cannot hear him; he must have gone away."

All at once they heard a faint sound in the distance, and thinking it was the noise of a falling tree, they took up their basket once more and went in the direction of the sound.

But after they had gone farther and farther into the forest, they heard no more sounds, and by this time there were so many little paths made by the wood-cutters in their labors that they could not find their way out again. They sat down on the thick carpet of fallen leaves and looked at each other in dismay.

After a while the girl began to cry and said she was hungry. They opened the basket and ate part of what had been intended for their father's dinner. When they had finished, the sun was quite low in the sky.

"Let us pray to St. Joseph," said the boy, falling on his knees. His sister did the same. Hardly had they seated themselves on the leaves once more, when, without footfall or rustle of branches, an old man appeared. He wore a brown cloak, but no covering on his head. In one hand he carried a staff. His hair and beard were white, his eyes dark and kindly; he smiled upon them, motioning them to rise. "It is Joseph!" they both exclaimed. But the stranger did not

speak. Still smiling, he made a sign that they should accompany him. They did so, and in a short time they were at the edge of the forest, in sight of their home, just in time to meet their father and some neighbors who were setting out in search of them. But the old man who had led them out of the woods was gone. As no one knew of any such person in those parts, the villagers all agreed with the children that it must have been St. Joseph.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

"Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb." (*St. Luke* xi, 14.)

In the Gospels of SS. Mark and Matthew we read that this unfortunate man mentioned in our text was not only dumb, but also blind, and that his condition was not the result of sickness, but the work of the devil, by whom he was possessed. St. Jerome speaking of this man's recovery, says that three miracles were worked in him. The blind was made to see, the dumb to speak, and the possessed delivered from the power of the devil.

The dumb man is a figure of the human race, which, being a victim of the demon, like a blind man, cannot see its own misery, nor the light of truth, nor its duties, nor God, and, like a dumb man, cannot praise the Divine Majesty. The dumb man is also a figure of those sinners who, blinded by passion, cannot see things pertaining to God or to their own souls. They have lost their power of speech in not being able to confess their sins, to praise God, or to implore His mercy. Let us pray that God may not permit us to become blind and dumb like so many unfortunate brethren.

Many who did not know Christ, were influenced by envy and hatred. They said that He healed the dumb man by the power of the devil. These people saw nothing but evil in the most innocent and holy actions of their neighbor. How do *we* judge our neighbors? If we find that we are inclined to interpret their actions in a good sense, let us rejoice, for it is a sign that we have Christian charity in our hearts. But if we are inclined to find fault, we may know that it is hatred and envy that inspire us.

The strong man in armor is the devil, who had made himself master of the world by keeping almost the whole human race in bondage through errors of the mind and the power of the passions. As long as he could keep alive superstition, idolatry, and wickedness among men, he enjoyed his tyrannical power over them undisturbed. Jesus Christ came to take away this armor, and by His teaching, example, passion, merits, and grace disarms and overcomes the devil, destroys his kingdom, encourages us, and makes children of God of those who before were slaves of sin and victims of perdition.

When Jesus said: "He that is not with Me, is against Me," He gave the Jews to understand that He did not cast out devils by the power of the devil. The devil, says St. Jerome, wants men to be the slaves of their passions, whereas Jesus wants them to control and overcome their pas-

sions. The devil teaches idolatry, whereas Jesus proclaims the knowledge of the one true God. The devil entices men to sin, whereas Jesus exhorts them to practice virtue and to be just. How, then, can those agree whose purposes are so opposite? The enemies of Christ are those who combat His doctrines, who are indifferent in matters of religion, who work for selfish motives or to gratify their passions. He who does not work in the spirit of Christ, gains nothing, but rather loses all and is against Him.

The demon who is driven out from the soul of the converted sinner by virtue of penance, is the impure spirit who finds no rest. He is tormented by the desire to return and take possession again, and for this purpose redoubles his temptations. Let the repentant sinner be on his guard and never cease to pray for the grace of perseverence. Let him remember that the devil knows his weak points, and will not cease to attack him. Of the unfortunate man who falls back into his former depravities it may truly be said that his last state is worse than the first, for after relapse into sin the soul is more difficult to heal.

The woman who cried out: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee," is a figure of the Church, who so highly and justly praises the Blessed Virgin Mary, who bore and nurtured the Divine Redeemer, who is the cause of our salvation. We should enter into the spirit of the Church, bless the

Mother of God, and have recourse to her with childlike confidence.

To-day we are going to learn something of a Doctor of the Church. Remember it is not a doctor who feels your pulse. When you get a little older you will find that a man may be a doctor in many things besides medicine; for doctor means teacher, and sometimes lawyers and musicians receive the title because they know enough to teach others. A doctor of divinity is a doctor of sacred knowledge,—that is to say, he is learned in the things that relate to God and His service.

On the seventh of April we celebrate the feast of St. Isidore of Seville. On this day the Church in her glorious liturgy pours forth hymns of praise, recounting deed after deed and virtue upon virtue of this her favored son: "O brightest of doctors," she sings, "light of Holy Church, blessed Isidore, lover of the divine Law, Oh, plead for us with the Son of God!"

In the life of St. Isidore there came a time when, like our boys and girls, he didn't believe he ever could learn. He had an older brother named Leander, who was an archbishop and a very learned man, and above all a Saint in his daily life. Indeed they were a family of saints.

The third brother's name was Fulgentius, who is also canonized by the Church. There was also a beautiful sister Florentine, who became a nun. Now, Isidore used to go to school to his big brother, who was inclined to be very strict. Sometimes teachers are so anxious for their pupils' progress that they are severe without intending it. Each morning Isidore grumbled about having to go to school. "I am so very, very dull," he sighed, "and I have such long dreadfully dry lessons! And brother looks at me so hard when I miss that I forget everything I ever knew. I'd much rather stay at home and chase butterfiies."

Then and there spying a gorgeous one, the little fellow ran away in glee. Catch it he did, and two others besides, before he stopped; and then, hot and tired, he sat down on an old well to rest. It seemed to him that a wee voice whispered: "You'd better go to school, Isidore." Perhaps it was his guardian angel. But Isidore wasn't listening. He was too intent on the velvet wings of the little butterfly. Once more the voice came to him: "Dreadfully late!" and with that away darted the pretty winged creature, leaving Isidore to face the unpleasant fact that he was late for school. "I don't care!" he exclaimed angrily; "I'm not going at all, I am just going to play hookey to-day."

He sat there a long time. But, somehow, he

wasn't nearly so happy as he had been an hour ago. He thought of a number of things. But most of all he gazed down into the depths of the old well and wondered how the water got there, how long it had been there, and if he would drown if he fell in; and would his brother say it was a punishment, and preach about it in a sermon, until all the boys trembled in their shoes. Isidore shivered at the thought.

Finally along came a woman carrying a pitcher on her head. She set it down on the ground and proceeded to let the bucket into the well. "What makes that block so worn out?" queried Isidore, —"Why," said the woman, "that is caused by the rope passing over it so many times."—"Why is that stone hollowed out in one place?" was the next question. "Because the rain happens to fall always on that one spot." Then she went away. This new train of thought put Isidore in a better humor, and by and by he turned his face schoolward. "I 'spose if I study the same thing over and over again every day, I'm bound to get it into my head sometime; so perhaps I had better go to school, after all." He went, and by hard application succeeded where he had failed before. He went back to his master, and with the help of God became one of the most learned men of his time.

He assisted in converting Prince Recared, the leader of the Arian party; and with his aid, though

at the constant peril of his own life, he expelled that heresy from Spain. Then, following a call from God, he turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his friends, and embraced a hermit's life.

On the death of his brother Leander he was called to fill the vacant see. Among the numerous convents which he founded, the chief one was near Seville, where many great saints were trained. As a teacher, ruler, and founder, he labored not only in his own diocese, but throughout Spain, and even in foreign countries. He died at Seville on April fourth, 636, and within sixteen years of his death was declared a Doctor of the Church by the Council of Toledo.

The strength of temptation usually lies in the fact that its object flatters our pride, soothes our sloth, or is in some way attractive to the lower passions. St. Isidore teaches us to listen neither to the promptings of nature nor to the plausible advice of friends when they contradict the voice of God.

Holy Church celebrates his feast on the fourth of April.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

"A great multitude followed Him. . . . He said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" (*St. John* vi, 1, 15.)

A GREAT multitude followed Christ into the desert. They were so eager to be with Him and to hear His words, that they willingly underwent the hardships and fatigue of the journey. How many Christians show no desire to follow Christ on the way of salvation? How many refuse to hear His words when announced by His ministers.

The multiplication of the bread in the desert was a figure of the Blessed Sacrament, that Heavenly Bread which was to feed and nourish the whole world in the desert of this life, as the Jewish multitude was fed beyond the Jordan. In feeding that multitude Christ enlivened our faith, increased our gratitude, and favored us in favoring them. He wished to call the attention of the Apostles to the pressing want of the people and also to the impossibility of providing for them by human means. He knew that Philip and the other Apostles were weak in their faith. In order to draw their attention to the miracle which He had resolved to work Our Lord tried

them. Philip was to show repentance, for if he really believed his Master to be God and man, he should have known that it was an easy matter for Him to work a miracle to feed the multitude. Let us learn from this incident that God often withholds His help from us in order that we may realize our helplessness and to convince us that when we are freed from evils of soul or body, it is solely on account of the mercy and goodness of God. Hence, whenever it pleases Him to try us, let us give a proof of our faith.

Jesus gave thanks when He took the five loaves and two fishes. We should learn to do the same when we sit down to our meals. As the people received the food from the hands of Christ, so we receive it from God alone in the ordinary way of His providence, for without His blessing the earth would be barren and unproductive. Jesus then thanked the Father that He could provide for the people by a miracle that would benefit both their souls and bodies. Similarly must we thank God when we are able to assist the poor, and the most meritorious thanksgiving is to be prompt and generous in helping others for God's sake.

In ordering the fragments to be collected after the people had appeased their hunger, our Divine Redeemer teaches us how highly we should prize all things that come from God. Besides, those fragments were an additional proof of the miracle

He had wrought. A lesson to be drawn from this fact is not to neglect the smallest labors of God, the inspiration to prayer, the grace of receiving the Sacraments, etc., for from the effects we will learn to appreciate more fully the importance of the helps we have received.

Our Lord distributed five loaves; all ate and were sated, and still there were twelve basketfuls left over. Christ has promised those who remember His poor that their alms will be abundantly rewarded, and this miracle is a proof of it. In the same manner, if we help our neighbor for the love of God our alms will cover his wants, the act will be to our advantage, and before God we will gain a hundred-fold.

The Gospel tells us that the people, on witnessing the great miracle, thought of making Him their king. This is precisely what Christ wants *us* to do. We have said that this miracle was a figure of the Blessed Sacrament. Now, when we have approached the Eucharistic table, when we have been fed with the Body and Blood of Christ, it is our duty to proclaim Him the King and Master of our affections.

Christ fled into the mountain because He had not come to seek human praise or earthly honors. Let us learn from this to do all the good we can, but not to seek for a reward on earth;—rather to flee from the applause of the world, because it may make us proud and vain, and expose us to

the persecutions of the envious, whose number is great.

Sanctity can be attained in all states of life. In the martyrologies we find the names of many soldiers. Every true disciple of Christ must be a martyr in the inclinations of his heart, as he must be ready to lose all and to suffer anything, rather than to offend God. Every good Christian is also a martyr, by the patience and courage with which he bears his trials. St. George, *martyr and patron of soldiers, and patron saint of England,* has proven himself a hero and warrior of God, as his legend shows.

St. George lived during the reign of the wicked Emperor Diocletian. He was born in the Province of Cappedocia in Asia Minor. His parents were of noble birth, and both Christians. In his childhood he learned from them that the highest honor any man can aspire to is to be a faithful follower of Christ.

As George grew up, he became very strong, handsome, brave, and clever. He entered the Roman army, and because of his courage and endurance soon rose to high rank. The Emperor, Diocletian became very much attached to the young noble and made him a tribune. From that

moment George had before him a glorious career. But much as the young soldier loved his profession, he cherished his religion more. When the Emperor began to persecute the Christians, George felt that the time would soon come when he would have to give up his rank and lay down his life for the sake of his faith.

In the year 303 Diocletian published an edict against the Christians, the copies of which were distributed and posted in all the important public buildings throughout the Empire, including the town of Nicomedia in Asia Minor, where St. George was stationed. He threw up his commission, for he would not persecute God's Saints. Nor was he content to simply withdraw. He wrote to the Emperor and upbraided him for his impious conduct. For this offence George was seized, thrown into prison, subjected to horrible tortures. His jailers hoped that by making him undergo many and repeated torments they would force him to give up the faith he had so heroically defended. George bore his sufferings patiently. He fought a good fight and received the palm. On April the twenty-third he was beheaded at Nicomedia. A holy martyrdom was the greatest reward the heroic Soldier-Saint had asked of his Divine Master.

St. George is represented tilting his lance at a dragon which lies vanquished at his feet. This dragon is only an emblem. It represents sin,

which St. George so bravely overcame during the whole course of his life. The old writers and painters used to depict real monsters when they meant spiritual ones; and spiritual monsters are truly the worst kind that ever you could see, or know, or fight with. St. George's monster was *human respect, love of the world,* which is worse than any dragon. Let us take this "Great Martyr" for our own particular patron, and ask him to help us fight our besetting dragon, whatever it may be, as bravely as he. The Saints conquered their dragons by trying over and over again to overcome their smallest faults.

The feast of St. George is celebrated on April the twenty-third.

"Which of you shall convince me of sin? . . . But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple." (*St. John* viii, 46, 59.)

JESUS affirmed His innocence in order to convince the Jews of their injustice in refusing to believe His words. When a teacher combines great learning with a blameless life, he has a right to the confidence of those who hear him. No one would suspect an honest man of deceit. Let us learn to live up to our principles so that when we reproach others, they cannot rebuke us with inconsistency. Christ gave proof that His teaching was full of truth and heavenly wisdom, and the Gospel says that His enemies were impressed that they no longer had the courage to question Him. On the other hand, His life had always been so holy, prudent, and beyond reproach, that no one could accuse Him of the slightest transgression of the law or of sin. Justly, therefore, He reproached the Jews when He said: "Why do you not believe Me?" How many Christians deserve such a reproach from Christ!

The sentence Christ pronounced against the Jews should inspire us with fear. The Jews did

not believe Christ because they were not guided by the Spirit of God, but rather by their pride and hatred. But what can we say for ourselves if we refuse to hear the word of God? What shall we say if we care not for what God teaches us by the voice of His priests? We must then acknowledge that we are not guided by the Holy Ghost. How many Christians are like the Jews! Instead of profiting by the counsel of their confessors, they insult God and call the ministers of the Word of God fanatics. The charity of Jesus was seen on this occasion in all its greatness, and it teaches us how we should act when attacked by calumny and abuse.

Christ's answer was to the point. The interests of religion required Him to refute the false accusation that He was possessed by the devil. But this rebuttal was done with a meekness of which one possessed by a devil would not have been capable. Let us learn from our Divine Saviour to suffer false accusations for God's sake, as long as they are not injurious to our character or to the interests of religion; but when silence is detrimental to truth, religion, or our neighbor, we should speak out and refute the false accusations, though always with meekness, like Jesus Christ.

The Jews were so carnal-minded, says St. Gregory, that they did not understand Christ. He intended to say that whoever would faithfully

observe His law would not die. But the Jews thought He spoke of the death of the body and in their blindness fancied that He would have them believe a falsehood, since even Abraham had to die.

God assured Abraham that the Saviour would come. He lived and he died in this faith. Men who are ruled by passion cannot understand the truth; hence the Jews who were full of envy and hatred, did not comprehend His words. They understood Him to say that He, as a man, lived at the time of Abraham. They had not that vision which is proper to faith.

By the words, "Before Abraham was made, I am," Christ intended to reveal the truth that He was God, that as God, He was eternal and stood in need of nothing. Christ in His humanity was a descendant of Abraham, but as God He is eternal and existed before Abraham.

We need not be surprised that the Jews took up stones to cast at Him. When a person is hardened in sin, he ends by waging war against Christ. How many, who are the slaves of their passions, and refuse to amend their lives, end by denying the truth. He who has not the courage to overcome himself will, by degrees, lose his faith, hate religion, and become publicly known as an enemy of God.

Christ preferred to hide Himself, and by so doing, taught us to be meek and not to resist

the powers, even when we are sure of victory, in order not to irritate them still more and cause them to do us greater harm when an opportunity offers.

There was once a shoemaker at Alexandria, that wonderful city on the Nile. He lived in times far removed from our own, when all the people wore sandals, as children do now. In those days nobody despised men who worked with their hands; it was thought an honorable thing to labor. So a shoemaker or a tent-maker, a tanner or a weaver, might all be honorable men; they might be learned and of good birth. ANIANUS the cobbler was good and just, but he knew nothing of Jesus Christ. Being a Jew, he had heard strange rumors from the East about the advent of the long expected Messias, Israel's promised Saviour. He questioned all who crossed the borderland, and they told him terrible things about the short, bright passage of the Wonder-Worker of Nazareth, His shameful death, His much-talked-of Resurrection, the bold preaching of His fishermen disciples, their being persecuted and killed in distant countries. Anianus listened and thought much. One day by an awkward movement he ran the awl into his hand. It made an

ugly wound, and he was too helpless to bind it up.

At that moment a stranger entered the booth, and seeing what had happened, hastened to the cobbler's relief. He took the bleeding hand in his left, made the sign of the cross over it with his right, and uttered some words in a foreign tongue. The blood ceased to flow, the wound closed, and the rough palm was unscarred. Anianus looked up into the stranger's face. There was in it that look of peace and calm that is seen in the faces of some holy people. The stranger spoke first, for Anianus was too bewildered even to thank him. His name, he said, was Mark,—John Mark, for he was a Hebrew by birth and a Christian by religion. Then the face of Anianus brightened. Here was he who could tell him what he had so longed to know—all about Christ, of whom the travellers had spoken; of His work upon earth, of the Church He had founded. So the two sat together, work was forgotten, and the time for meals passed. Night came, and still both sat there. For Mark had much to tell. He who had heard from St. Peter all about Christ's life and death, the miracles He had wrought, the wisdom that dwelled upon His lips, the loving kindness that came from His hands. He heard of His death and His glorious Resurrection, of the fearful prophecy that had come true, of the destruction of Jerusalem and the

dispersion of God's favorite nation, of the glad tidings brought to Gentiles.

Anianus became a Christian and from that day worked for his new-found Lord with all his strength. He learned the truths of Christianity so well that Mark made him a bishop, and for four years they administered the diocese together, visiting the churches, teaching the ignorant, nursing the sick. And when Mark was obliged to quit Alexandria, he left his friend behind to govern in his place. For eighteen years Anianus, the cobbler, was bishop of the great city of Alexandria. "He was a man well pleasing to God," says a great Christian historian. These two great friends, Saints Mark and Anianus, have their feast-day together on April the twenty-fifth.

PALM SUNDAY

"Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately ye will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them to me." (*St. Matthew* xxi, 2.)

Bethphage was a village not far from Bethany, the residence of Lazarus. In this village were kept the sheep, goats, oxen, and other animals that were sacrificed in the Temple according to the Mosaic law. From this place they were solemnly led through the "Golden Gate" to Jerusalem.

It was from this village that our Saviour went to Jerusalem to be crucified. He was the Lamb that was to be slaughtered for the salvation of the world, the Victim of which all the other sacrifices of the law of Moses were only figures. He wanted, therefore, to go to that place, walk on the same road, and enter the same gate by which the victims entered that were destined for the sacrifice on the solemn day of the Paschal Lamb.

The two beasts of burden have a peculiar signification. The old ass, inured to work, was a figure of the Jewish nation under the yoke of the Old Law. The colt was a figure of the Gentiles, who up to that time had lived according to their will. Christ sent His disciples to bring in both.

In the use of these animals was fulfilled the prophecy of Zachary. Christ gave proof of His divinity, of His power and absolute dominion over all things. God alone can see future events, especially those depending on free agencies. And when Christ told the Apostles with certainty what they would find in the place to which He sent them, He proved that He was God, as He claimed to be. In regard to the answer His Apostles should give the owner of the animals, He gave them to understand that, as God, He was the owner of all creatures. We should learn from this that what we possess is not really ours, but God's, from whom we have received it, and that we are obliged to surrender it to Him when He reclaims it.

On the day Christ entered Jerusalem, the Paschal Lamb was led with great solemnity from Bethphage to the Temple. This was the reason why a multitude hath gathered in the city. It is not surprising, then that our Divine Saviour should meet so many people on the road. Besides, all Jerusalem was in excitement and wonder because of the great miracle Jesus had but recently worked,—the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

The people, wishing to pay homage to Christ and to make His entry into Jerusalem as solemn as possible, strewed palm and olive branches, and spread their garments on the road. We must see

the hand of God even in things which appear so natural and accidental. Jesus went to Jerusalem to be crucified, and by His death to conquer hell and to bring down upon men the fullness of divine grace. Hence God willed that the multitude should applaud His triumphal entry into the city. The palms proclaimed the victory over Satan. The olive branches signified the oil of grace. The garments spread under His feet indicated the renunciation of all earthly affections which the just must make for God's sake; for, according to St. Gregory, earthly affections are the garments that entangle our souls, and to combat our spiritual enemies victoriously, we must get rid of them.

From this Gospel we should learn not to trust the world, but to hope for our reward from God alone. To-day we behold Christ entering Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the people; five days later we shall see Him dragged to Mount Calvary amidst curses and blasphemies. To-day the people are all love for Him; in a few days we shall see them filled with hatred, demanding His blood. To-day Christ crosses the valley of Josaphat humbly; a day will come when, surrounded by angels, He will judge the living and the dead in that same valley. Let us, therefore, learn not to trust the world, which quickly abandons what it once loved, with ourselves, who are liable to change at any moment. Let us hope

from God the reward for the humiliations we have suffered upon earth.

To live to God, my dear Children, we must die to ourselves; that is, we must try hard to put down anger, disobedience, lies, impurities, and avoid the snares by which the devil tries to catch us. The Saints were favored by God with the sweetness of heavenly peace and love because they gained the victory over their passions by the fervor of their charity, humility, patience, and meekness. Self-denial prepared them for, and supported them in, this state of perfect virtue.

The greatest crown of the beautiful city of Siena was St. Catherine. She was the daughter of a tradesman, who was not rich, but well to do, and hence able to give his children a good education.

Catherine was so pleasing in appearance, so quick to learn, so amiable in disposition, and so different from other children that from her earliest youth she was noticed by all with whom she came in contact. Even people who did not know her were wont to remark the noble sweet-faced child who went to church so frequently. As a child, prayer was her delight; she would say a

"Hail Mary" on every step as she mounted the stairs.

At the age of twelve, her parents thought of engaging her to a young nobleman. Catherine had always been an obedient and dutiful daughter, but now, when she saw how firmly her parents were set on this scheme, she told them of the vow of virginity she had made, and begged them to consent to her wishes. The parents were displeased and treated her harshly. They loaded her down with domestic drudgery, as if she had been a hired servant. Hard labor, humiliations, and the insults of her sisters were to Catherine a subject of joy. If anything grieved her, it was the loss of the small room which she had occupied at home by herself, where she could practice her devotions and austerities.

This was taken away from her, and the parents obliged Catherine to share the chamber of her sisters. She bore all her trials with meekness and patience and never grumbled at the hard tasks she was obliged to perform, realizing that God is present everywhere and that a pious soul can be united with Him in the midst of a crowd.

Finally her father and mother ceased their persecution and gave their consent to her entering the Third Order of Saint Dominic. She continued to reside in her parents' home, uniting a life of active charity with constant prayer. She soon became widely known for her sanctity. Her cell

was her paradise, prayer her element, and her mortifications were no longer restrained. She gave liberally to the poor, nursed the sick, and comforted the afflicted. People brought oil, wine, corn, and various other articles of food to her to be distributed, well knowing that her ardent charity would place these gifts where they were most needed. So abundantly did God bless her generous hands that very often these stores were miraculously increased. The ingratitude of those whom she served did not in the least lessen her kindness toward them.

In the hospital there was a woman whose case had been diagnosed as leprosy. Catherine heard that the poor creature was to be isolated, but as she offered to come every day to dress her wounds the invalid was allowed to remain. Never did a day go by but Catherine was at the woman's bedside, cheerful and tender, washing, dressing, soothing the afflicted leper. You would naturally suppose that Cecca—such was the name of the poor leper woman—would be most grateful and humble. Not at all. She resented the least delay, mocked at her benefactress, grumbled and insulted her. But no word of complaint ever crossed the Saint's lips, so that in the end Cecca herself marveled. But Lapa, Catherine's mother, came very near forbidding her daughter to continue her work, for she feared that Catherine would contract the disease. Catherine, however,

was not in the least anxious. It mattered little to her whether she was a leper or not, so long as God's poor were relieved. And one day, as if to try her faith to the utmost, Catherine's hands were found to be leprous. Horror seized upon all. Those who had praised her charity most, now blamed her imprudence and avoided her company. Catherine was unmoved. She continued her kind offices, though the illness lasted a very long time. And when Cecca at length died, Catherine was true to her charge to the end. But when the last sod of earth was thrown on the leper's body, Catherine's hands were restored to health, and became whiter than any other part of her body. You see our Lord is never outdone in generosity.

Her ceaseless labors and fatigues, her constant fasting and travelling from place to place, shortened her life. She died in Rome, at the age of thirty-three. Her feast is celebrated on the thirtieth of April. As she died daily to herself, so must we.

EASTER SUNDAY

"And very early in the morning . . . they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen." (*St. Mark* xvi, 1, 7.)

THE holy women in to-day's Gospel sincerely loved Jesus. The early hour did not deter them from showing Him their devotion. Perfect charity knows no fear, says St. Basil. He who sincerely loves God will never lose time; he abhors every delay that hinders him in doing all the good he can for God. We ought to learn from these pious women to be courageous in working for the glory of Jesus Christ.

A soul that sincerely seeks the glory of God will never remain in darkness, ignorance, or doubt, but will always find light to comfort and guide it in all its steps. If according to the law of nature the sun had risen, it had also risen according to the law of grace, because Christ had risen from the dead, and by His Resurrection bestowed the full light of the Gospel upon the whole world.

These pious women did not know that soldiers had been placed on guard around that sealed tomb. The thought uppermost in their minds was how to remove the large stone in front of the grave. How often do we fear imaginary diffi-

culties, and think not of the real ones that would prevent us from doing good if God did not remove them. These women knew it would be difficult to remove the stone, but they hoped to accomplish the task with divine help. One who truly loves God, hopes in God, is never disappointed. When the women came to the sepulchre, they found that the stone had been removed.

The young man whom the women saw in the sepulchre was an angel, whose countenance, as St. Matthew relates, was as lightning, and his garments white as snow. His countenance was terrible to the enemies of Christ; his garments were white as snow, on account of his heavenly purity. He told the women not to fear, because he who goes in search of Christ never need fear and only those must tremble who wage war against Him. He asked them to notify Peter and the other disciples, and to go at once and proclaim the Resurrection of Christ. Let us learn from this that, when God is pleased to send us joy and consolation, we must not seek our own satisfaction and pleasure, but rather give glory to God by praising His infinite mercy and love and acknowledging our own unworthiness.

These pious women were the first to see Christ. God makes no distinction of sex, age, or state of life. He who first goes in search of Christ with the fervor of charity, with devotion and the

balm of holy virtue, will be the first to receive His special favors.

Christ had reason to be displeased with the conduct of His Apostles during His passion. But in His great charity He pitied their weakness and still loved them. He calls them by the endearing name "Brethren." They had fled from Him in His shame and sorrow; Peter had even denied Him; all had doubted His prophecies; all had lost hope in His cause. But not one word of reproach did our Lord utter. The only penance He enjoined on Peter for his threefold denial was a threefold act of love. Jesus waits patiently for returning faith in His disciples; He heaps proof upon proof; He allows the doubting Thomas to touch His wounds.

Our dear Lord brings with Him love and forgiveness for all. Denial, cowardice, hopelessness, —all is forgiven and forgotten. Let us, in this blessed Easter-time, conform our dispositions to His. Are we on good terms with every one of our neighbors? Have we wiped out old scores and made a clean slate of grievances? Have we an humble heart full of charity?

No matter what position you hold in life, you must try and win Heaven. If your lot is to serve

others you can do God's holy will in this humble calling. Out of the ranks of servants, Saints have come, and Jesus Himself told us that He did not come to be served, but to serve. What is there to be looked down upon in the simple attire of a servant? Underneath it may be a pious and pure soul, most pleasing to God. It is your duty to be pleasant, kind, and amiable towards your servants. The first place to practice charity towards our neighbors is at home.

Queens who consecrated their hearts and their crowns to God and poor servant-maids who served Him by hard labor are united in Heaven. The Church has set aside the twenty-seventh day of April as a feast day of one of these holy servant-maids. Zita was a native of Italy. Her pious mother raised her in the fear of God, recommending her to do what pleased God, and warning her against everything that displeased Him. Her father was a poor farmer, who had great difficulty in supporting his family. When Zita was twelve years old, she asked her parents to allow her to hire herself out as a servant, and thus relieve them of the task of feeding and clothing her. Her request was granted and she obtained a place in the household of a noble family. Her industry, gentleness, and piety soon endeared her to her employers, and in a few years she became an important person in

the household, enjoying the fullest confidence of her master and mistress.

Her charity to the poor was boundless. When her mistress furnished her with an excellent wardrobe, Zita gave her best dresses away. She often deprived herself of a portion of her meals to give the food to beggars. She herself became a beggar in order to relieve the necessities of the poor.

She never neglected the pious practices which she had learned from her good mother at home. She rose early in the morning, said her prayers devoutly, and attended Mass in a near-by church. Then she went briskly to work, no matter how difficult or disagreeable it was. While at work she was careful to do everything just right. "The hand at work, the heart with God," was her maxim. At meals she was satisfied with little, so that something might be left for the poor. The poor were her greatest concern. God was so pleased with her piety and charity that He often assisted her in a wonderful manner.

One day, as she left the house with her apron full of bread for the poor, she met her master. "What have you there?" he asked. She opened her apron for his inspection, but it revealed a fine collection of scraps from the rich man's table for her poverty-stricken friends. Zita proceeded on her way bringing sunshine to the homes of the destitute.

Once the lady of the house had invited many guests for dinner. She gave instructions to Zita concerning the variety of dishes she desired to have done in the best style, and all ready for the appointed hour—six o'clock in the evening. Zita rose before daylight, hurried to the market, made the necessary purchases, brought them home to her kitchen, and then, as usual, went to Mass. While she was in church, just at the elevation, she fell into an ecstasy which lasted all day. People coming into the church at different hours thought that she was merely paying a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and so did not disturb her. When she came to herself it was near sunset, and she was terrified to think of the dinner that was not even begun at the hour when she was supposed to serve it.

She hurried home in great distress. What grieved her most was the thought of her kind mistress's humiliation when she discovered that her guests were to be deprived of the expected repast. On reaching the kitchen, she scented odors that vouched for some excellent viands. "Ah," she thought, "my mistress has engaged another cook, I shall be discharged, of course; but at least the family will not be put to inconvenience. Entering, she heard the rustling of wings, which she mistook for the new cook's dress, supposing she had just left the kitchen for the dining-room. Everything was ready for the dinner. She

tasted the different dishes and found them very palatable. Anxious to see the new cook, she went into the dining-room; but although the tables were laid, there was nobody to be seen. She found no traces of the mysterious cook. The lady of the house brought in her guests, and the dinner was served. Never had they eaten so delectable a meal. The memory of that banquet has lasted nearly seven hundred years; for to this day, when any one in Lucca wishes to praise a dinner, he says: " 'Twas a dinner like that of St. Zita." This occurrence resulted in making St. Zita the patroness of cooks.

After she had worked forty-eight years in the same house, the Lord called His faithful handmaid home to Heaven. A bright star appeared over the house, and the children on the streets cried out: "St. Zita is dead; let us hasten to see her."

Low Sunday

"And the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together . . . Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you." (*St. John* xx, 19, 31.)

Christ came into the room though the doors were locked. We must know, says St. Augustine, that God can do many things which we cannot understand. As Jesus, while yet mortal, could walk on the water without sinking, and as He was able, without being seen or touched, to pass among those who wished to cast Him from the precipice and to stone Him in the Temple, so after His glorious Resurrection He passed through closed doors and entered the room without difficulty. When we close our eyes in order not to see the vanities of the world, stop our ears not to hear them spoken of, and seal our lips in order not to speak useless and evil words, then Jesus will come into our hearts and bring us His peace.

By the sweet words, "Peace be to you," He wishes to call our attention to the great fruit of His passion, which was peace between God and ourselves. Christ exhorts the Apostles not to be disturbed by the malice of men. He invites them

to confide in Him. Furthermore, He wants to let them know that He is not displeased with them on account of the weakness they showed during His passion.

Our Lord retained the wounds in His hands, feet, and side after His Resurrection to indicate that it was by suffering that He had purchased His present glory. He also wished to confirm the truth of His passion and of His Resurrection, to excite our gratitude and remind us of the great price He paid for our immortal souls.

By the words, "As the Father hath sent Me, I also sent you," Christ gave authority to the Apostles to fulfil their mission, and indicated the manner in which they should do so. As Christ was sent on earth by the Eternal Father, so the Apostles were sent by Christ, in whose hand is placed all power on earth and in Heaven. Christ taught the world by His doctrines, His miracles, and His example, and the Apostles were to do, and have done, in like manner.

Our Lord took this occasion to impart the Holy Ghost to the Apostles in order to enable them to exercise judgment over consciences. They were in the name of God to retain or to forgive sins, and Christ endowed them with His own spirit for so exalted a ministry. The Apostles were to communicate this same Holy Ghost to all their successors, that is, to the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church, in order that the authority

received from Him should be exercised to the end of the world.

Thomas was wrong in distrusting the evidences given by his companions. He should have believed that Christ possessed the power to fulfil the promises He had made regarding His Resurrection. He should have believed the testimony of his fellow-Apostles, and had less confidence in himself and more in his Divine Master. St. Gregory the Great tells us that the unbelief of Thomas has profited us more than the faith of the believing disciples, since he was forced to believe by the evidence of his senses, and thus we are strengthened by the removal of all doubts.

We can also enjoy the peace which was announced to the Apostles if, with the grace of God, obtained through Christ, we strive to avoid sin, love our neighbor with true charity, and bear with his defects, and being content with our condition in life.

Our souls should be so many living tabernacles of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. It was the wish of a great Pope that little ones should come to Our Lord and receive Him daily into their hearts. Draw near, little ones, and see how kind and loving He is, and how dearly He loves you. It is only by being much with a person that you learn to love him tenderly. Come often and linger with our Divine Lord, and He will

build you up, form your character and mould you according to His will.

Among the Saints who are noted for their love of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, is Blessed Imelda, who has rightly been chosen as the patroness of little children preparing to receive Holy Communion for the first time.

From her babyhood, Imelda was a holy child, who seemed to live and move among the angels. She loved to talk of Jesus and Mary; their names were the first she ever pronounced. Prayer was ever a pleasure to her. When the little people of her acquaintance were playing at the games usual at the time, she would be missed from the circle. After seeking her all over the house, the children would usually find her in a room which she had arranged as an oratory, on her knees before the crucifix.

Imelda was attracted in a special manner to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. She loved the house of God as the home of her Eucharistic Lover, and delighted in the solitude and restfulness of the sanctuary. She made the mystery of the Real Presence her constant study and thus learned to know God's ways. This was the secret of her holiness.

As a little child, Imelda entered a convent. Tall for her age, fair in complexion, she was very beautiful, the angelic sweetness of her disposition being reflected in her serene and happy countenance. Every one loved the little girl, and it soon became evident to the nuns that she was one of God's chosen souls.

Imelda went to church and to Mass like the nuns; she saw them going to Holy Communion every day and longed to go also. One day she told the Sisters how strong her longing was, and begged them to let her receive her Lord. Now, in those days it was not customary for children to make their First Communion very young, and the good nuns did not like to make an exception for Imelda. So the poor child had to watch the Sisters go up to the holy table and come away filled with good things, and remain hungry. But little Imelda was wise. What man would not give her, she determined to ask from God. So she prayed earnestly to Our Lord to let her receive Him into her heart. One day, after Mass on the eve of the Ascension, when the nuns had already left the chapel, a delicious fragrance suddenly filled the cloisters of the Convent. No incense had been used at Mass, and the aroma did not resemble the scent of flowers. A glorious light shone about Imelda, and the Sacred Host hovered over her head. Someone saw the miracle, and called the chaplain and the rest of the com-

munity. The priest waited reverently with the paten in his hand, the Sacred Host rested upon it, and the minister of God gave the child the Bread of Life. In awe and wonder the Sisters knelt by the child's side, joining her in fervent acts of adoration and love. When one of the Sisters went to rouse her, she found the child had gone home; the joy of her First Communion had proved too great for her little heart. It had broken with joy, and left her free to go to Our Lord forever.

Her feast is celebrated on May the twelfth.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

"I am the Good Shepherd." (*St. John* x, 11, 16.)

When Christ said, "I am the Good Shepherd," His intention was to formally announce to His hearers, and at the same time to the whole world, that He was the Shepherd promised by the Eternal Father,—that is, the only begotten Son of God, who, becoming man, would teach the whole world, and gather all nations into the one fold of His Church. Hence the Jews were guilty of sin in not recognizing Him. In vain do they even now expect Him. We are the fortunate ones who by the grace of God acknowldege Jesus Christ to be the Shepherd who was promised and announced by all the prophets.

He wishes to be recognized as the Good Shepherd who cares for His sheep and leads them to good pastures, gives them water to quench their thirst, and defends them from the wolf at the risk of His own life. He loved us with so great a love as to assume the form of a servant; He leads us on the way to virtue by His own example; he feeds us with His holy doctrine, with His grace, and with His own flesh; He quenches our thirst at the fountains of the Holy Sacraments.

A good shepherd knows each one of his sheep by name. He knows which are the best, the indifferent, and the poorest; he knows which are the strong, the fruitful, and the defective, and when one of them goes astray, he instantly sets out in search of it. He provides for the weak and carries the sick on his shoulders. Christ is all this in regard to us, His fortunate sheep. He knows each individual soul, its qualities, its merits, its defects, and its wants. If we go astray, He mercifully seeks us; if we are weak, He assists us and helps us through His ministers; if we are sick, He refreshes and heals us with His Holy Sacraments.

The sheep know their shepherd by his voice and obey his call. If the wolf comes, they run to him for protection, and he places himself at their head and sets the dogs on the assailant. Lastly, the sheep, so timid by nature, have no fear of their shepherd; they permit him to shear and handle them as he pleases. In the same manner do the true Christians know Jesus Christ by His virtues, His commands, His voice, and even by His sufferings. Let us always look up to Him, let us confide in Him, have recourse to Him, and patiently receive from His hands whatever affliction He may send us.

When Christ referred to the other sheep in today's Gospel, He meant the Gentiles who did not belong to His flock. He commissioned the Apos-

tles to bring the truth to those who did not belong to His fold. They were to enter the Church by Baptism and form one people with the Jews, He to be the loving Father of all.

A great lesson is contained in the Gospel of the Good Shepherd. First, what a great happiness it is to belong to a shepherd so loving, so powerful, and so solicitous for our salvation. Secondly, we should constantly thank God for His great mercy. Lastly, we should show ourselves loving and obedient sheep. And as the sheep repay the shepherd for his care and labor in their behalf, so should we, by our affections, good works, and resignation to the holy will of God repay in a manner the sacrifices which Christ made for us.

In the fourteenth century there lived a great Empress, Jane, a daughter of Albert of Bavaria and wife of Wenceslaus, Emperor of Germany and King of Bohemia. This holy woman was passionately beloved by her husband, but he was a bad man and made her suffer a veritable martyrdom by his insane jealousy. There was at the court a great Saint, called John Nepomucene, who had been chosen confessor to the court and preacher to the Emperor. This was a difficult

post to occupy for a Saint, and John risked his life as often as he preached a sermon. The Empress chose the Saint for her own confessor, and by the help of his advice made rapid strides in the way of sanctity. She had always been devout and kind; now she became doubly pious and charitable, and the very shadow of sin made her shudder. But Wenceslaus could not bear to see his wife so holy, nor did he like to see her spend so much time in pious exercises. He began to suspect his wife, and an intense and wicked desire came over him to know the secrets of her heart. There was only one man in the world who knew those secrets and Wenceslaus made up his mind that that one should tell him all he knew. Jane confessed to John the priest; John should tell him what he heard in confession. This was the wicked Emperor's resolution.

But Wenceslaus had to do with a priest of God. When the order came to the confessor that he was to disclose all he knew of the Empress's conscience, John respectfully but firmly refused. A very short time after his refusal he was cast into prison and chained. He should remain there as long as he refused to do the Emperor's bidding, was the decree.

But after a little while a courtier come to announce that John was expected at a banquet to be given in his honor, and that on a certain day he was to present himself at court. John obeyed; he

took his place at table, and was honored by the Emperor. After the repast all the guests were dismissed except the Saint. The Emperor retained him for a private, confidential chat. They conversed for some time on indifferent matters, though the Saint well knew what was on the Sovereign's mind. At last the name of the Empress was spoken, and once more the Saint was pressed to tell what he knew of her conscience. John answered that he knew less of what he knew in confession than if he knew nothing at all. Wenceslaus was white with rage; he ordered the priest to be taken back to the dungeon and tortured. But John did not utter one word, although he suffered great pain. The Emperor, instead of being overcome by such heroism, hardened his heart still more. Seeing that he could not overcome the Saint by torture, he once more released him. John went about his priestly functions again, but he knew well enough that his trials were not over. He prepared his soul for another combat.

On the eve of Ascension day some ruffians called at John's house in the dead of night, carried him out, and dropped him into the river that runs between Great and Little Prague. He was to be drowned in the dark of the night, that no one might know of his execution. But such was not God's will. Early on the day of the feast a cry was heard in the city, and thousands flocked to

the river to see a great miracle. There, floating upon the quiet waters, with a halo of light around his head and a finger upon his dead lips, floated John the priest, who had loved silence better than riches, and had kept the Seal of Confession from the wicked tyrant.

The Church celebrates his feast on the sixteenth of May.

There is a special Providence that guards the tongue of the priest. This story tells what it cost one holy priest to keep the Seal of Confession unbroken. And remember, it has never been proved that with all the millions of confessions that have been made since the Sacrament of Penance was instituted, the seal was ever violated.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

"A little while, and now you shall not see Me; and again a little while, and you shall see Me. (*St. John* xvi, 16.)

This text records words which our Saviour spoke to His Apostles a few hours before His passion, that is, shortly after the Last Supper and before He left the supper-room to enter the Garden of Gethsemane. He spoke to them in this manner in order to console them for the sufferings they were to endure during His passion and while preaching the Gospel later on.

The Lord's manner of speech was somewhat obscure. He wanted to draw the minds of the Apostles from the subject of the sufferings He had foretold, and that He succeeded we can see from the fact that they began to discuss His meaning and lost sight, for the time being, of those sufferings. Jesus also wished to convince them of His divinity by showing them that He knew their thoughts.

The expression "a little while," has a peculiar significance. According to the Jewish method of computing time the day ended at sunset, when the following day began. Hence, while we say that the Last Supper took place on Thursday evening,

according to Jewish reckoning it took place early on Friday, because it was after sunset on Thursday. Hence Christ's words, "a little while," etc., were spoken on the same day on which He was crucified. The Apostles would, therefore, see Him only a short time longer, because at three o'clock that same day He was to die on the Cross. But they would see Him again after a little while, as on the third day after His death He was to rise from the dead.

The words, "You shall lament and weep," St. John Chrysostom explains as if Christ intended to say: "After a little while, nay, after a few hours, you will behold Me taken prisoner, bound, crucified, dead, and buried. And you, my disciples, will weep and mourn on account of what has befallen Me; while in the mean time My enemies will rejoice at having succeeded in overcoming Me. But after a little while, when I shall have risen gloriously from the grave, your sorrow will be changed into joy at beholding My triumph, and the clamor of My enemies will be turned into shame, disgrace, and despair."

All good Christians can learn a lesson from these words of our Saviour. He had positively declared that the cross is necessary for all, and that His faithful followers will weep and mourn in this world, but enjoy eternal happiness in Heaven, so that all they suffered on earth will be turned into joy. St. Jerome says: "It is impos-

sible for man to be happy both on earth and in Heaven; it is impossible to enjoy the pleasures of this world and those of Heaven; it is impossible to pass from the joys of the present life to the joys of life eternal." He who mourns on earth will rejoice in Heaven, and he who laughs and is merry in this world, will weep in hell."

We must know that if we are faithful followers and true friends of Christ, we may expect sorrow and suffering here on earth, but all this will be for our greater glory and joy in Heaven. We are now mourning like Joseph in the pit and in prison, but a day will come when our joy will be greater than his was, when he was raised to the throne, and we shall see that our humiliations and suffering have been so many steps by which we arrived at the height of happiness, and come into the possession of a Kingdom which no one can ever take from us.

The poor and lowly ever seem to have been the special friends of God; it was the shepherds,——simple, uneducated men, to whom He first manifested Himself in His humanity. Obedient to the call of God, these humble men were privileged to be the first worshippers at the cradle of the Infant Lord.

On the seventeenth of May our holy Mother the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Paschal Baylon. Paschal seems to have been marked out for the service of God from childhood. His parents were so poor that they could not afford to send their son to school. In spite of having no education, the boy grew up gentle and refined, his lovable disposition endearing him to all.

Paschal was attracted early in life to the service of God. He loved prayer and was never so happy as when adoring the Blessed Sacrament in church.

His work as a shepherd did not require an education; yet the boy must have been anxious to learn, for we read in his Life that he used to carry a book with him when he herded his flock and would ask those whom he met to teach him the letters of the alphabet. In this way he learned to read and write.

Though Paschal was not able to spend much time in church, his love for the House of God increased daily. Although his deep sense of God's presence enabled him to say his prayers devoutly in the open country, he longed and sighed for the sanctuary and for the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

When on the higher ridges of the Sierras this Spanish shepherd boy cast his eyes over the valley which lay at his feet; he saw the roofs of many churches and chapels, and his thoughts rested on

them lovingly. He knew that the quaint buildings were the dwelling-places of His Lord and Master in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Here is a beautiful legend found in his life.

One day as Paschal was watching his sheep on the mountain-side, he heard the consecration bell ring out from the valley below, where the villagers were assembled for Mass. He fell on his knees, when suddenly there stood before him an angel of God, bearing in his hand the Sacred Host, and offering it for his adoration. Learn from this how pleasing to Jesus Christ are those who honor Him in the great mystery of His Love.

When Paschal was twenty-four years old, he entered a Franciscan monastery as a lay-brother, and remained in this humble capacity, until the end of his life, edifying all by his gentleness and fidelity in the menial tasks which called for so few intellectual gifts. The monks often asked him to become a priest, but he refused, preferring to work as a servant to the end of his life.

As he grew older his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament increased. He was never happy except when in its Presence. He would spend hours on his knees before the tabernacle. He was often lifted up from the ground in the fervor of his prayer, while his pale face shone with a spiritual beauty, and his cheeks tinged with a delicate flush. From the very source of eternal truth he drew such profound wisdom that, unlettered

though he was, he could explain the most difficult doctrines of our holy faith. Sometimes God taught the Saints things which they never learned out of a book. This is called "infused" knowledge.

As the bell of his monastery was ringing for the elevation at High Mass on Whitsunday, 1592, this lover of the Blessed Sacrament calmly gave up his soul to God.

At the Elevation of the Sacred Host during the Requiem Mass said for him Paschal's eyes miraculously opened and looked at the Blessed Eucharist.

St. Paschal teaches us never to suffer a day to pass without visiting Jesus in the narrow chamber where He, whom Heaven itself cannot contain, abides day and night for the love of us.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

"I go to Him that sent Me." (*St. John* xvi, 5.)

At the Last Supper Jesus told His Apostles that He was going away; but no one knew whither He was going and no one asked Him. Christ wished them to understand that the time had come when He should leave them because He was going to His crucifixion and death, after which, having proved His glorious Resurrection by frequently appearing to them, He would be taken up before their eyes into Heaven.

Christ was very anxious that the Apostles should ask Him where He was going, because if they would hear that by means of His Passion and death He would go to His glory and there obtain for them the graces He had merited by His Passion, they would be in great part consoled for their painful separation from Him.

Furthermore He announced to them that after His departure they would be persecuted, and their persecutors would imagine that they were serving God when they put them to death. The departure of their Master, and the prediction of their own sufferings, increased the sadness of their timid hearts. However, Christ consoled

them by saying that He was going for their benefit, for He would send them the Holy Ghost, who would not come if He did not ascend into Heaven in order to send Him.

The Holy Ghost would convince the world of the great sin that lay in rejecting the teachings of Christ. In spite of all proofs, the Jews did not acknowledge Jesus as the expected Messias, and the Gentiles did not even think of Him. The Jews therefore sinned by their want of belief, their obstinacy, and their injustice; and these sins were the cause of many others, especially hatred, envy, and murder. The Gentiles, on the other hand, were engulfed in the mire of their passions without being aware of their miserable condition. But after the Holy Ghost had bestowed His gifts on the Apostles, the world would know the injustice of the Jews and the guilt of the Gentiles.

The Holy Ghost would convince the world of justice. A just man always thinks of God; his affections are well regulated; he loves and desires what is good, fears and avoids what is evil, constantly does good, and keeps away from sin. Now we may judge whether the Jews and the Gentiles had this justice. The Gentiles professed false doctrines; they were corrupt and followed their passions, and therefore regarded the religion of Christ as foolish. The Jews, holding that sanctity consisted in the scrupulous observance of the legal ceremonies, persecuted the Envoy of

Heaven and put Him to death. Now who was to undeceive both the Jews and the Gentiles? Who was to give all creatures tangible proof of the sanctity, the excellence, and the greatness of Christ? It was the Holy Ghost; and the rapid and triumphant progress of Christianity is a proof of His abiding presence in the Church.

The Holy Ghost was to make known how false was the judgment of the world in regard to God, in regard to Christ, and in regard to the precepts of morality. As soon as the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost and preached the truths of the Gospel, it became manifest how badly deceived the Jews and the Gentiles had been in their judgments. The devil finally lost that tyrannical power which up to that time he had exercised over their minds and hearts. Thus Christ, a few hours before His death, foretold that deliverance of men and that overthrow of the devil's power which the Holy Ghost accomplished after Pentecost.

The lesson brought home to us in this day's Gospel on seeing the Apostles filled with sorrow because of the impending separation from their Divine Master, is that we shall be very sorry when of our own accord, we have separated ourselves from Christ by sin; and learning how necessary the Holy Ghost was to the Apostles, we should always invoke Him, that He may instruct us in the truths of the faith.

There is one who is called "the children's Saint." He was singularly sweet and winning in manner, as well as handsome in person, good-tempered and pleasant. He was a favorite with every one and was also known as "Good Little Philip," a loving title by which his aid is often sweetly invoked by the children who dwell among the scenes familiar to his holy and beautiful childhood. Among the lives of the Saints, we find none more attractive and beautiful than that of St. Philip Neri, whose feast is celebrated on the twenty-sixth of May.

From boyhood Philip's heart seemed always to be filled with the love of God and a true piety, fixed on Heaven and heavenly things. Gentle, loving, studious, obedient, the beau-ideal of all that is holy and innocent, Philip Neri was truly an unusual child.

After his fifth year he was never known wilfully to transgress the precepts of his parents. Once a sister disturbed him on purpose while he was reciting the psalter with another sister and he gently pushed her away; for which action his father chided him; and this he bewailed with many tears as a great fault. He was very patient in sickness, and so gentle that he seemed not to

know what anger was. When he was only eleven years old, he frequently visited the churches and prayed and heard the Word of God with singular devotion.

He was a diligent student, took high rank in his classes, and wrote choice and elegant verses,—an art much encouraged at that time. He pursued some of his studies at the celebrated monastery of San Marco in Florence. His cousin Romolo, a wealthy cloth merchant, invited Philip to live with him and to learn the ways of commerce. But instead of becoming less pious by reason of his attention to business, Philip daily loved God more and more. This sunny-tempered, pure-hearted youth, had a pleasant word for every one, and his very sight seemed to draw others to a better life. The wealth which his cousin so gladly shared with him, and the rich presents he lavished upon him, did not spoil Philip.

Whilst stopping with his cousin, who lived near Monte Casino, the youthful Saint sought the friendship of the holy monks in the Benedictine monastery near by and it is said that he laid the foundations of preëminent sanctity there. He was fond of taking long walks and often visited other monasteries in the neighborhood.

When Philip was twenty-three, he began to visit the hospitals. As he had begun to make friends among the young men of Rome, they followed him

to the hospitals, and besides doing good to his sick and dying fellow creatures, Philip by his pious intercourse was of great benefit to his young companions.

All the children of Rome knew and loved St. Philip, and when they met him in the streets, he was sure to greet them with a kind word and a sunny smile that made their hearts lighter. He was always in good spirits, despite many troubles and trials.

It was his delight to gather a group of boys around him. On rainy days and in winter he welcomed them to his room and allowed them to make what noise they pleased at his door. He would say: "All I want is that you should not offend God." Sometimes, if one of the boys was proud, he would make him carry his big, clumsy dog through the streets to the house of a friend, saying he must not mind being laughed at. Above all he urged the boys never to be idle, as idleness was the root of all evil. He required them to go to confession often. At the same time he never missed any occasion of mingling good counsel with amusement.

Philip wished the children to serve God, like the first Christians, in gladness of heart. He said this was the true filial spirit, which expands the soul, gives it liberty and perfection in action, power over temptation, and the grace of perseverance.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

"Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." (*St. John* xvi, 23.)

CHRIST promised the Apostles and all Christians that His Father would grant them all graces for which they asked in His name.

If we pray in the name of Jesus we shall always be heard. Christ is the Mediator between God and man. By His obedience and His death He merited the mercy, grace, and benediction of the Father. And He has made us His brethren, members of His mystical body and co-heirs of His glory. The prayer that we address to the Father in the name of Jesus will always be considered by Him as an act of mercy and grace toward us, and as an act of justice in regard to the infinite merits of Christ. However, our prayers offered in the name of Jesus must be according to His spirit of Christ and for our eternal welfare.

Although we always pray in the name of Jesus, yet we sometimes fail to receive what we ask for. St. Thomas says: "Some pray and at the same time are attached to sin; some do not pray as they ought; and some pray for things that are not good, or at least of no benefit to their soul, and

therefore their prayers are not heard." If, however, they are sorry for their sins and pray in the proper manner for spiritual graces, and in the name of Jesus, the Eternal Father will infallibly grant their request.

As the Apostles were always with their Master, they never had any cause to ask the Father for graces in the name of Jesus. But when Christ was about to leave them, He exhorted them henceforth to have recourse to His Father and pray to Him in His name, assuring them that the Father would hear their prayers on account of His merits.

Christ made use of parables and enigmas in speaking to the Apostles. He employed veiled and obscure expressions, but at the proper time the Holy Ghost was to reveal everything to them in plain words. After Pentecost the Apostles understod all, and spoke of the most sublime truths with wonderful clearness.

Christ promised that the Holy Ghost would suggest to them what they should ask for, and that they would obtain it from the Father because the Father loved them on account of their faith in Him and their great love for Him. Let us love Jesus, and the Eternal Father will love us and will always be ready to hear our prayers.

From this Gospel we should learn to grow in faith, hope, and love; to pray in such a manner that our progress may be pleasing to the Eternal Father and that we may obtain those graces for

which we ask Him through, in, and with Jesus Christ.

On the twenty-seventh day of May the Church celebrates the feast of a Saint who is often called *Father Deo Gratias,* for he lived and died thanking God. The name of this Saint is VENERABLE BEDE. His life was spent in writing and studying and composing for the glory of God. When he did not work he prayed. He prayed so much that people said it was hard to understand how he found time for anything else, and he wrote so much that people said it was a wonder he could have prayed so much. That makes one understand that prayer does not hinder, but rather helps us in our work. For oftener than not those do most who pray most.

Bede was "Mass priest,"—that is, he had to say the daily Mass for the monastery of Jarrow, a fine old convent, with a school of young monks whom Bede taught. When he was not in school he was writing learned books, some of which have come down to us and are of great value.

Among his daily duties were: winnowing and thrashing the corn, feeding the lambs and calves, working in the bakehouse, garden and kitchen. He was always cheerful, obedient, and industri-

ous. His greatest pleasure was to copy books.

The Lord was very kind to Bede, He gave him many days to study, teach, and compose books. The end of the Saint's life is the most touching part of his career. Children as a rule do not like to think of death, but I think the youngest among you would like to have been with this English Saint when he was dying. It was on the Tuesday before Ascension, and Bede was very ill. His feet were swollen and he breathed heavily. But he spent the day dictating, as usual. Sometimes he would say, quite cheerfully: "Take down what I say quickly, for I know not how long I may last."

The following night Bede did not sleep, but gave thanks all night long. On Wednesday he again urged his scribes to make haste. The Rogation procession interrupted the morning's work. All the young students had to go out into the fields and help sing the litanies, asking a blessing upon the fruits of the earth. As the day drew to a close, one of the brothers said: "Dearest Master, one chapter still is wanting; can you supply it?" He answered, yes, but they should write quickly. At three o'clock he begged all his dear brothers in religion to assemble around him. He wanted to say good-bye, and to give them presents. He was a poor monk, so his presents were poor,—a few pepper seeds, a few grains of incense, and some handkerchiefs. The rest of the

day passed in joy until the evening, when the scribe said: "Master, there is yet one sentence to be written!" He answered: "Write quickly!" The boy wrote and said: "Now it is done." Then he held up the page. "Thou saidst the truth, *consummatum est*" (it is finished)! "Take my head into thy hands, for it is very pleasant to me to sit facing my old praying-place, and thus to call upon my Father." And so they laid him on the floor of his cell, and he sang: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and as he invoked the Holy Ghost, he gave up his spirit, and went to his heavenly Home.

It was the eve of the Ascension, when the monks were singing the first Vespers of the feast. How well must Bede have prayed, that he wished to sit and look at the place of his prayer before he died!

As the body sinks under fatigue unless supported by food, so external works, however holy, wear out a soul which is not regularly nourished by prayer. Even on the most crowded day we can take time to lift our soul to God and draw new strength from Him.

Your first duty is to your soul, and then other things may take their turn; but always remember that the salvation of your soul is the final object of your life.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

"When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send from the Father, the spirit of truth. . . . He shall give testimony of Me." (*St. John* xv, 26.)

CHRIST promised that the Holy Ghost would come upon the Apostles and give testimony of His divine mission and the truth of His doctrine, The promise was fulfilled. The world has acknowledged Jesus to be the only-begotten Word made flesh: it has recognized in Him the Messias foretold by the Prophets and foreshadowed in the Old Law. The world was convinced of the holiness of His doctrine, by which truths not known before were taught worthy of the God who imparted them and worthy of man, who was called to put them into practice with the help of divine grace.

As the Apostles were the first to know Christ and had been on intimate terms with Him for three years, they were witnesses of all He did and said. But, although they spoke with Him often and saw all His actions, they did not fully understand His words. But after having received the Holy Ghost, they remembered and understood all they had seen and heard during the three years

of Christ's public life. They were enabled to teach the nations, to explain the truth, and to establish the discipline of that Church of which they were to be the founders. They could say: "We have heard with our own ears and seen with our own eyes all the things which we announce to you"; and thus they gave most effective testimony to Christ.

Our Lord had only the good of His disciples before His eyes when He foretold their sufferings and persecutions. If He had not foretold them, they would have been in danger of losing courage in the propagation of the Gospel, and of giving up the cause of their Divine Master. Having been made acquainted in advance with their future trials and sufferings, they were better prepared to meet them. The fulfillment of the prophecy was an argument of the omniscience, and, consequently, of the Divinity of Christ. Also of His power to help them in the battles they had to fight in His name. The very fact that they had to endure persecutions strengthened their faith. St. Gregory says that a wound is less painful when it has been foreseen, and Christ's predictions had this effect on the Apostles, that the persecutions seemed less painful, inasmuch as they expected them. Moreover, they rejoiced in the midst of those persecutions, since they had been foretold by their Divine Master, and the more their faith was strengthened, the more they were encouraged

by the hope of the reward they were to gain by their sufferings.

The words addressed to the Apostles were also in a certain sense intended for us. We also should bear witness to Jesus by leading a life according to His holy law. The sufferings and persecutions of the Church are testimonies in favor of her divine origin. We also, when we sincerely profess the faith and observe the law of the Gospel, may expect to be persecuted. The servant is no better than his master. Since Christ suffered tribulations of every sort during His earthly life, and finally died a most terrible death on the Cross, can we complain when we are visited with various afflictions?

The lives of some Saints show us the danger arising from worldly companions. Trampling on human respect they turned to God and by this means made the world a ladder by which to climb to Heaven. A lesson that we can learn from the life of Venerable Cæsar de Bus is how easy it is to keep God's grace, how much harder to get it back when we have lost it. And that is only just. If we throw away money or presents given us by our parents or friends, they are not so ready to give us more. If we take good care

of them, and use them wisely, they will give more freely. Dear Children learn now, and see how you mean to walk as you grow up. Keep your virtue by the grace of God. Don't count on winning back a portion and making up for what you have lost. Should you have already lost your baptismal innocence do your best with humble hearts, to recover it.

Young Cæsar was a valiant soldier. He kept himself unspotted amidst the license of war. After peace was made, he went to Paris, and lived the gay life of a civilian in the capital, gradually lost his fervor, and fell upon evil ways.

One day, after a night of carousals, he fell to the ground in a faint. His dissolute life had told upon his health. In the sickness which followed he had time to think, and God came to him with a loving invitation. Cæsar made up his mind to repent, leave the world, and become a priest. He rose from the sick-bed a different man. But there were years of struggle before him; the path of reform was thorny. It was well for him that he had two devoted friends who had agreed to fight for his soul in prayer. After his conversion Cæsar went to Avignon to gain the jubilee indulgence. By chance he met some of his evil companions of his former days. They, not knowing the change that had come over him, asked him to attend a ball. He consented, through human respect, and found himself again in the midst of

temptation. He left the house sad and discouraged; his conscience was ill at ease, and the things of God seemed dull and impossible. On his way homeward, he passed a convent of Poor Clares. The religious were just chanting the morning hours. Their voices sounded like heavenly music after the strains of revelry which were still ringing in his ears. The chant brought back to the young man's heart the longing for goodness which he had so recently felt. He went home, prayed for strength to break with the world, and resolved to confess his Lord at all times. An opportunity soon occurred.

One day Cæsar was in church, dressed in his court robes, with plumed hat and rapier. He saw the sacristan coming towards him with a lighted candle. He knew that the summons meant an act of faith. Cæsar rose at once, took the candle, and followed the sacristan. They accompanied the Blessed Sacrament to the bedside of a sick man. He faced the sneers of his old companions, whom he passed in the streets, and this act of courage completed his conversion and brought him fresh grace. He broke entirely with the world, studied for the priesthood, and became the founder of a pious community of secular priests for the education of the poor.

Cæsar had been a soldier under King Charles IX. After his conversion he was a soldier of the Great King. He had still to fight hard, he was

tempted with evil desires for twenty-five years. But he bore all his sufferings to make reparation for his past life. Saddest of all, there came upon the holy man a total blindness that prevented him from saying Mass. To one like him, who knew the value of a Mass, so well, this was a grievous affliction. May the twenty-eighth is the Venerable Cæsar's feast.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

"If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him." (*St. John* xiv, 23.)

In these beautiful words Jesus tells those who sincerely love Him that they must prove their love by faithfully observing His precepts and promises in return that the Eternal Father will love them and, together with Himself and the Holy Ghost, will come to them, with His grace and abide with them, and make them living temples of His Divine Majesty.

Look at those who do not love Christ, and consider their conduct. Are they anxious to have Him for a friend, or do they appreciate what He has done for them? Do not many of them rather wish Him banished from the hearts of men? Are not even those who are not entirely wicked as indifferent toward Him as if He had never done anything for mankind? If you wish to know whether you love Christ, follow the advice of St. Gregory, and examine your own mind, tongue, and conduct. If you do not think of Him, if you do not speak of Him, if your manner of living is contrary to His law, you do not love Him.

Christ promised His Apostles to send the Holy Ghost, who would be their teacher and consoler. The Apostles had heard many things from Christ which they failed to remember or could not understand. Hence the necessity of a teacher who would recall to their memory, and assist them in understanding, the things they had heard. After the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles, the scales fell from their eyes, and all that Christ had spoken became perfectly clear to them. They confounded the learned of this world in matters relating to religion. The Holy Ghost is still the Teacher of truth in the Catholic Church as he was at the time of the Apostles.

The duties of the apostolate entailed many hardships. The Apostles had to suffer all kinds of persecutions, and hence the promise of a Comforter who was to console them in all their afflictions. We all know the sublime manner in which these promises were fulfilled. The Holy Ghost must also be our teacher, otherwise we cannot understand the doctrines which we hear from the ministers of Christ. And if we are patient and resigned in the trials of life, it is the gift of the Comforter whom Christ sent in the person of the Holy Ghost.

When the Jews took leave of persons they were wont to say: "Peace be with you." So Christ, when about to leave His disciples on the eve of His sacred Passion, He speaks to them of peace.

His wish is not an empty one, but He gives them real peace. He is omnipotent and can give whatever He wishes. Oh, what a consolation for us to know that His precious words did not stop with the Apostles, but came down directly to us. Let us, therefore, show our gratitude for this great grace by obeying the Church and making frequent use of her means of grace.

To-day we should admire and adore the power of the Holy Ghost, and beseech Him to renew His wonders in our souls, and render thanks to God, who, on Pentecost day, accomplished the mysteries of the faith and the establishment of His Holy Church.

Many Christians in their daily pursuits never find time for serious thought of eternal salvation or the reading of a pious book. They live as if they made it their business to unlearn the only thing which it concerns them to know, and to lose the only thing for which they exist,—religion and the love of God. How many Saints hid themselves in solitudes that they might devote themselves wholly to the service of God!

There is one Saint in particular, who bears the title of "God's Exile." His name is Columba or Columbkille,—from the great number of monas-

tic cells, called by the Irish Killes, of which he was the founder. He is often quoted as saying: "The Church is my mother; my country is wheresoever I can gather the largest harvest for Christ." He learned from childhood that there is nothing worthy our esteem except that which advances the love of God in our souls.

As a boy Columba learned archery, swimming, horsemanship, and the use of the sword and spear. He could tell the course of the stars and read the wind. He learned the Latin alphabet by copying out the letters on the waxed surface of a long wooden tablet by means of a sharp-pointed metal instrument. Sometimes the letters were cut on a cake, and after he had familiarized himself with their shape, he would be allowed to eat the cake as a reward. At his mother's knee he learned how St. Patrick had brought the faith to Ireland, and was taught to value it as his greatest possession.

Columba early made up his mind to be a religious and was sent to a monastery to study for the priesthood. In those days the traveller went mainly on foot or by water. On his arrival at Moville Abbey, he was taken to the little church to make thanksgiving for a safe journey, and then his brogues were taken off and his tired feet bathed by the kindly guest-master. After some refreshment he was introduced to the Abbot and his studies arranged. The day was divided into "three labors," prayer, work, and reading. Co-

lumba made rapid progress in piety and learning. While at Moville he was ordained a deacon, and in this office his gift of miracles became apparent for the first time. One day, while he ministered at the altar, it was found that the wine for the Holy Sacrifice was wanting. In answer to Columba's prayer, the water in the cruet which he held was turned into wine.

When he had finished his studies Columba was sent to Bishop Etchen for ordination. This holy man, who was Columba's cousin, and a son of the reigning Prince, was ploughing his field when Columba arrived. The many friends and kinsmen of the young priest gathered joyfully to hear his first Mass and receive his blessing. Many were desirous of joining him in a religious community.

Columba had an intense devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and an old Irish book, describing the warmth of his adoration, says: "Columbkille used to go to Heaven every Thursday while he was alive."

He came to the altar so often and remained so long on his knees, that he wore down the stone upon which he knelt.

The Saint's love for the poor was such that he made it a rule that one hundred poor people should be fed each day at the monastery gates.

Columba loved his native country, but he loved God more, and it was his consuming zeal for the

conversion of those living in pagan darkness that decided him to leave Ireland.

His gentleness and his charity won the hearts of all who conversed with him. Four years before he died, St. Columba was favored with a vision of angels which left him in tears, because he learned from those heavenly messengers that God would prolong his exile on earth for four years more.

It was on the morning of Pentecost Sunday, June the ninth, 597, after having labored thirty-four years in Scotland, that he openly foretold his death: "This day is called the Sabbath, that is, the day of rest, and such it will truly be for me; for it will put an end to my labors." He was the first in the church at midnight to sing the Matins, but knelt before the altar, received the Viaticum, and having given his blessing to his spiritual children winged his flight to Heaven.

Columba is Scotland's Saint, and although the faith he taught has been forsaken by many of his children, it is still revered and faithfully practiced in many parts of the Highlands, where the voice of Columba chanted the praises of the Most High.

His feast is on the ninth of June.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not and you shall not be condemned." (*St. Luke* vi, 36, 37.)

After having commanded His disciples, and through them us also, to be as perfect as His Heavenly Father, He made known to them that the first step on the way to perfection is charity toward our neighbors. The object of this whole discourse is to commend the principal works of mercy, and to censure that pride and false piety which causes us to see the faults of our neighbors, but not our own.

The principal works of mercy commanded in this Gospel are: not to judge others rashly; not to condemn those who have fallen; to forgive those who have offended us; and to give alms, or in other words help those who are in need.

Is it a sin to judge the actions of others? The Holy Ghost tells us not to trouble ourselves with things that do not concern us. If, therefore, our neighbor does something that is not praiseworthy, as long as it does not interfere with us, we should close our eyes and not take notice of it. Charity also forbids us to judge our neighbors' actions

upon insufficient grounds. Hence Christ in this passage of the Gospel commands us not to judge rashly of our neighbors' actions. If the conduct of our neighbor is scandalous, we should be on our guard and avoid all intercourse with him, so that our reputation and conscience may not suffer.

St. Bernard says: When the failings of your brother cannot be denied, excuse the intention, attribute them to ignorance or surprise, have compassion on his weakness, and think that you might have acted similarly under similar circumstances. This is the law of charity. Some one has said a word that is positively bad; are we sure that he knew its full meaning? Another has done something that is reprehensible; are we sure that he did it intentionally and with reflection? Another's sin is evident; but would we have been more faithful to God under similar circumstances? Charity commands us to excuse our brethren as far as possible.

The Pharisees had brought to Christ a woman who had been caught in actual sin, and according to the law, should have been stoned to death. Jesus wrote some words on the ground and then said: "He that is without sin among you let him cast the first stone." We may apply these words to ourselves. He that needs no pardon from God may refuse to pardon his neighbor. God will forgive us in the same degree that we forgive others. How just, holy, and beneficial,

therefore, is the command Christ gives us here.

If we close our eyes in order not to see the faults of others God will mercifully close His eyes to our faults. If we do not judge, but rather have compassion on others, God will not judge us, but will compassionate our failings. If we pardon our neighbor, God will pardon us; and if we give alms to the needy, He will give us the treasures of His grace. In a word, as we treat our neighbors, so God will treat us;—with this difference, however, that we do good to others as men whose power is limited, whereas God will reward us with a power that is infinite and a generosity altogether His own.

Those who see the mote in their brother's eye are the false devotees and proud Pharisees who censure the most trifling faults in others, but care not about their own misdeeds. Christ admonishes them to correct their own wicked ways before they presume to correct others. If we wish to avoid the reproach of the Divine Master we must pay attention to our own failings, and not busy ourselves with our neighbors', unless duty or charity commands it.

Nothing can more aptly illustrate the benefit of having a virtuous mother than the example fol-

lowed by her children. Many mothers are virtuous themselves, but not all are successful in training their sons and daughters. They are too indulgent, too fearful that their children may have to suffer; they take every labor and trouble upon themselves, leaving their offspring to enjoy only the good things of life. Such was not the method of the holy Queen MARGARET of Scotland.

Perfection consists in keeping a guard upon the heart. Wherever we are, we can detach our minds from the world and converse familiarly with God. Let us take St. Margaret for an example.

From her earliest years she had cared nothing for the vanities of the world; she knew that in many cases they work poison in the soul, and keep it from being occupied with the concerns of heaven. She was very intelligent, witty, and vivacious, and her beauty was far beyond the ordinary. But she was fond of prayer and meditation, in which she spent many hours of the day, and when her relatives had vainly looked everywhere for the young princess, they would usually find her in the chapel, or coming from the cottage of some poor sick woman, to whom she had taken nourishing food and consoling words.

King Malcom of Scotland and Queen Margaret were an ideal couple. They had eight children, all of whom inherited the good qualities of their parents. The queen did not allow her children

to be brought up in luxury. Their food was of the simplest. They were trained to hardships and taught how idle and empty are the things of this world when they are not used as a means to gain Heaven. She took the children with her on her visits to the poor and suffering, and made them minister with their own hands to the sick.

Whenever the queen stirred out of her palace, so great was the fame of her charity, she was surrounded by troops of widows and orphans and other distressed persons, who looked upon her as a mother, and she never sent any one away without relief. At that time life was far more simple than it is now. Fancy any royal couple at the present day washing the feet of the poor or waiting upon them at table! Yet this is what Queen Margaret and her royal husband did nearly every day of their lives. They never sat down to dinner without first having served nine little orphans and twenty-four grown-up paupers. In Lent and Advent they often called in as many as three hundred poor, the king serving the men and the queen the women with the same food that was served at the royal table.

Besides the good works already mentioned, the queen erected hospitals, built churches, and restored to their former estate many noble families rendered poor by the wars which had devastated Scotland for so many years. In order to find time for prayer, she slept very little and ate barely

enough to keep alive. Every year she kept two Lents of forty days each: the one at the usual time, the other in preparation for the holy feast of Christmas. Daily she recited the short Offices of the Holy Trinity, of the Passion of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the dead. In short, she lived the life of a mortified religious in the midst of the world.

On her deathbed she received the news that her husband and her eldest son were slain in battle. She thanked God who had sent this last affliction and offered up her great sorrow to her Divine Master. When the queen had uttered the words: "Lord, Jesus Christ, who by Thy death hast given life to the world, deliver me," her Guardian Angel took her pure soul up to her Divine Lord.

The Church celebrates the feast of Saint Margaret on the tenth of June.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"A certain man made a great supper, and invited many." (*St. Luke* xiv, 16.)

All agree that the man mentioned in to-day's gospel is our good God, who places His treasures at the disposal of His friends, that is, of our souls, and invites His creatures to nourish themselves at this heavenly banquet, which is full of sweetness and delight. In regard to the supper we must, first of all, observe that dinner and supper differ in this: that work is stopped to take dinner, and after dinner is generally resumed. After supper man works no more, but retires to rest and forgets all that troubles his mind and body. Many Holy Fathers regard the nuptial banquet as a symbol of the vocation to the faith, which is followed by much work. The supper mentioned in this day's Gospel, however, indicates man's entrance into Paradise, which is followed by perfect peace and rest. On the other hand, several Doctors of the Church recognize in this supper the Holy Eucharist, the precious food that is taken by man when he receives the Most Holy Sacrament.

The supper resembles the Holy Eucharist in so far as when the supper hour has come, the day's

work is done, the meal is taken in peace, and then each one retires to rest in order to recover new strength and vigor. Now the same happens to the soul when it partakes of the Eucharistic banquet. When a Christian approaches this table with the proper disposition, he entirely forgets the cares of the world and converses confidentially with God, his true friend, brother, and father. He enjoys peace of mind, during which he recovers from all his sufferings. He receives new strength to battle against his spiritual enemies and to carry even heavier crosses.

Those who refused to come to the supper symbolize the Christians who, immersed in the cares, pleasures, and vanities of the world, do not care to receive the Holy Sacrament, and do not prepare themselves to enter into heavenly rest, thus showing by their actions that they do not belong to the number of the elect.

Christ, in mentioning the poor, the feeble, and the blind, wishes to call our attention to the fact that God, in bestowing His favors, has no regard for birth, riches, talents, beauty, or other personal advantages. It is a fact that the poor and lowly are treated kindly by Him, and sometimes even better than the great. It is not only the perfect that are called to nourish themselves at the Eucharistic table, but also those who are poor in merits, blind according to the spirit, ignorant and less constant in the divine service. By virtue of

this heavenly bread they become rich in grace, gain strength, are enlightened, and become able to make greater progress in virtue. Let timid souls impress this lesson on their minds, and draw comfort and consolation therefrom.

Woe to those who do not heed God's generous invitation! A day will come when they will no longer hear that voice inviting them to taste the delights of Paradise. The Jews, of whom those who refused to attend the supper were a figure, did not heed the words of the Divine Master, and were abandoned to their fate. All that resist the voice of God, who calls them in so many different ways, to eternal happiness, will find that they have excluded themselves from Heaven. As we have applied this parable to the Blessed Sacrament, let us reflect that he who, on account of worldly cares or a sinful life, does not receive this Sacrament, runs the greatest risk of being deprived of it at the hour of death, because then Jesus Christ will refuse to be the food of those ungrateful children who turned away from Him when He lovingly invited them to partake of His table.

There is no better way to cultivate patience than by prayer, the reception of the Sacraments, and the thought of the sufferings of Our Lord.

By this means Saints made their path of suffering the path to Heaven. Here are the words of Christ: "If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."

St. Germaine was a poor girl, but her parents were rich in piety and the fear of God. From her infancy Christ chose her to bear His cross, and her short life was one of sharp and incessant suffering. In her mind she constantly kept before her the image of the crucified Saviour. She felt how much the Son of God had suffered and thought that she, a sinful human being, should not rebel at affliction. And so she bore all adversities quietly and cheerfully.

The lowly peasant girl, destitute of human knowledge, possessed the science of patience so precious in the sight of God. May we, through her intercession, obtain this virtue and meekly accept the crosses that strew our path.

As Germaine grew up, her good mother taught her to pray, to love God above all things, and to keep His commandments. And what she taught in words she enforced by her own example. Little Germaine obeyed her mother faithfully, and it was her dearest delight to pray. The faults and bad habits that have to be punished in most other children were never noticed in Germaine. She showed no self-will, no impatience, no untruthfulness, no overfondness for pleasure or fun. Her sole pleasure seemed to be to go to

church and kneel for hours before the Blessed Sacrament.

Herself a child of poverty, Germaine loved the poor. She looked upon them as the sisters and brothers of the little Child Jesus and gave them what alms her mother would spare out of their small means. Then Germaine began to ail. Painful sores covered her tender body. Most other chidren would have cried, complained, and fretted. Germaine offered up her sufferings to the Saviour on the Cross. When she was six years old, the sickness left her, and she grew and blossomed like a flower in the sun. Her sweetness of manner was a reflection of her pure and holy soul.

She lost her mother early. Her father married again, and she had to endure the persecutions of a cruel stepmother. Blows and insults were her daily portion. In addition to these, she suffered from continual infirmities, greatly increased by the cold and hunger to which she was exposed. Germaine's life was chiefly spent watching over the flocks of the pastures, and in spite of neglect and cruelty, her soul grew rapidly in holiness and perfection. The unhappiness of her home she bore with unfailing sweetness out of love for the suffering Christ.

As Germaine liked to hear Mass every morning, she would stick her shepherd's crook into the ground and then, wonderful to relate, the sheep

would keep on feeding quietly around it. In going to Mass over a swollen creek Germaine would walk across without even wetting her feet. Our Lord often consoled the deserted maiden. He was with her when she herded the sheep and at night when she prayed in the stable.

She used to gather little children round her and speak to them of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. Her pupils never forgot the angelic expression on her countenance. Her one joy was to receive Holy Communion, wherein she found strength to bear her cross.

Blessed Germaine prayed daily for the conversion of her stepmother that God might change her heart and grow kinder to the poor. One day, as Blessed Germaine was carrying in her apron a few crusts of bread, the stepmother ran after the child to watch her. The Almighty took this occasion to enlighten the poor woman on witnessing the kindness and love with which her charge fed the needy. The hard-hearted woman was moved by this plain evidence of Christian charity, and mended her ways, so that Germaine was now treated with kindness. But her sufferings borne for the love of Christ became so dear to the saintly maiden that she continued to sleep in the stable.

At length, Christ called to Himself the poor shepherdess, whose life had been so faithful an imitation of His own. Germaine died at the age

of twenty-two. Two monks passing through the village saw a bright light shining over the stable where she lay, and virgins clothed in white conducting a new sister to Heaven.

Her feast is kept on June the fifteenth.

"The publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured." (*St. Luke* xv, 15.)

It would be well if all Christians would imitate those publicans. They heard that the Divine Redeemer invited all to do penance because the Kingdom of God was nigh, and therefore they came to Him and were well received. Happy they who willingly go to hear the doctrine of Christ preached by His ministers! This is the first step towards penance and perfection. The internal inspirations which we experience when we hear the word of God are a proof of the kind welcome which Jesus Christ is accustomed to give us.

The Pharisees and scribes murmured because they did not wish to know that a truly just man always feels compassion for sinners, and that the Saints have always endeavored to promote their conversion and eternal welfare. The proud Pharisees avoided public sinners, as if they feared to be defiled by contact with them, and they wished Jesus to do as they did. When He received these sinners kindly they were angry and murmured. Let us learn from the Divine Mas-

ter to be charitable towards those who err and to avoid the pride and hard-heartedness of the Pharisees.

By this parable Christ encouraged sinners to be converted, by letting them know how dear they are to God. Always going in search of the lost, He helps them with His grace to repent and rejoices with His angels in Heaven when one of them returns to the path that leads to salvation.

Christ compares sinners to sheep. The sheep is a very simple and dull animal, which, while grazing in the field, does not notice that it has left the fold, and when lost, cannot find the way back. It seems, therefore, that in comparing the sinner to a sheep Christ intended to say that the sinner strays from the right path through ignorance, dazzled and bewitched by the things of the world. He separates himself from the just without knowing it, and, lost in the desert of this world, does not realize his misfortune and has not, humanly speaking, the means of returning, unless God in His infinite mercy goes in search of him and rescues the unfortunate creature.

The sinner must find great encouragement in Christ's comparison of Himself to a shepherd. As soon as the good shepherd misses a sheep, he hastens to seek it, and when he finds it, he does not punish it, or compel it to walk; but calling it by name, he carries it on his shoulders to the fold. Friends gather and rejoice with him at having

brought back to the fold the unfortunate sheep which was in danger of being devoured by the wolves.

As the shepherd searches for the lost sheep at once when he knows it has gone astray, so God immediately called Adam to the right path when he had sinned, by announcing to him the coming of the Saviour. The shepherd leaves his flock in order to seek the lost sheep; and the Divine Redeemer, in order to save Adam and his race, left the company of the angels and the splendor of His glory, and came to dwell on earth under the likeness of a servant. The shepherd, having found the lost sheep, treats it kindly; and the God-man, when He was among sinners, treated them with great kindness. The shepherd carried the sheep on his shoulders, and the God-man carried us in His arms and sustained the weight of our sins. And as the shepherd called his friends to rejoice with him because he had found the lost sheep, so the Incarnate Word called all the angels to rejoice with Him when He returned triumphantly from Mount Olivet to His Father, taking with Him those whom He had rescued from hell.

From all that has been said we should learn to be charitable toward sinners, zealous for their conversion, anxious in working out our own salvation, and thankful to Our Lord Jesus Christ, who in His infinite mercy came in search of us when we were condemned to perdition.

Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar gives life to the Church of God as the sun gives life to the earth. Without a tender love for the Blessed Sacrament,—the Eucharistic Sun which vivifies the Church of God—without frequent reception of the Bread of Angels, the Christian cannot have life in him, or attain to a high degree of sanctity or union with Almighty God. The Saints have ever had a tender devotion to this holy mystery of faith, and St. Juliana Falconieri loved it in a very special manner. From her earliest years her happiest moments were spent kneeling before the Tabernacle, her eyes fixed on the little golden door, as if seeing far beyond it, and blessed with a deep realization of the mystery of the abiding Presence of Our Lord. She received Holy Communion several times every week, approaching the Sacrament of Penance before each Communion, in order to prepare herself for the visit of her Divine Guest. On the days when she communicated she partook of no other food, the Sacred Bread sustaining her bodily life. After being thus refreshed, she was frequently wrapped in ecstasy and lifted up from the ground in the fervor of her prayer.

Juliana was born in answer to a prayer of her pious parents. The first words she learned to pronounce were the names of Jesus and Mary. Under the guidance and care of a saintly uncle, she grew more and more united to God, and it was evident that she would be a great saint. The child was very beautiful, with a loveliness like that of an angel; her spotless innocence of soul was reflected in her countenance. The expression of her face was ever sweet and gentle, her smile radiant, her figure tall and graceful. Her manner was so sympathetic and kind that every one loved the young saint and delighted to be in her company. God had bestowed on Juliana a beautiful voice which charmed her hearers when she sang hymns in the "Annunziata," a church built by her parents in Florence, before she was born, in order to obtain from God the priceless treasure of a child.

Although possessed of great beauty and charm, Juliana was quite free from vanity or conceit. She dressed plainly, and was never known to look at herself in a mirror. Such was her modesty that it is said she never gazed upon the face of a man during her whole life. Like St. Stanislaus, she had a most sensitive conscience, and a great horror for even the name of sin. At the bare mention of it she would tremble and shudder, nay sometimes faint.

Her life in her father's house was so devout

and retired that it closely resembled that of a religious. Her sanctity attracted many novices, who enthusiastically spent their time with her in prayer and good works. The little company was the nucleus of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Juliana drew up a rule for this Order, and against her will was elected its first Prioress. Although superioress of the convent, she was never so happy as when doing the menial work of a servant.

She loved to nurse and assist the poor when they were sick. Seeing in those afflicted ones the person of Jesus Christ Himself, she found no task too menial, no sacrifice too painful to satisfy her love.

The Saint wasted away through a disease of the stomach, which prevented her taking food. She bore her silent agony cheerfully, grieving only because she could not receive Holy Communion. At last, in her seventieth year, she sank rapidly and begged to be allowed to see and adore the Blessed Sacrament once more. It was brought to her cell, and reverently laid on a corporal, which was placed over her heart. As she expired, the Sacred Host disappeared. After her death the form of the Host was found stamped upon her heart in the exact spot over which the Blessed Sacrament had been placed.

In the Church calendar we find the feast of Saint Juliana on the nineteenth of June.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land." (*St. Luke* v, 3.)

This ship belonged to St. Peter, and St. Ambrose says that it was the same which St. Matthew speaks of as tossed about by a furious tempest, and St. Luke in to-day's Gospel describes as overloaded with fish. From this ship Christ taught the people; from it He commanded the wind and the waves; from it, though asleep, He saved the Apostles from drowning. The ship is therefore a figure of the Catholic Church, of which St. Peter and his lawful successors are the visible head and foundation.

The Catholic Church was from her very start exposed to persecutions on the part of paganism, heresy, and false philosophy. Through the preaching of the Apostles and their successors she made immense conquests in all parts of the world. In the midst of her great trials she always had the assistance of God. He watched over her safety and led her to victory, although sometimes He seemed to sleep and to have aban-

doned her to the fury of her enemies. The Church possesses the truth and teaches doctrines that are directly opposed to the spirit of the world. You will, therefore, recognize in her the bark of Peter, now tossed about by the waves, now loaded with treasure, now triumphing over the tempests, because Jesus Christ is with her.

Christ told Simon and his companions to launch out into the deep and let down their nets. To launch out into the deep signified the great work upon which the Apostles were to embark. And to let down the nets indicated the preaching of the divine word by which they were to draw all men from the abyss of ignorance and place them in the bosom of the Church. It was, therefore, necessary that Christ should first teach and finish His teaching, since the Apostles and their successors had to repeat His very words. After He had revealed the truth He sent His apostles out into the whole world to preach it. They preached the Gospel at the command of Jesus; therefore no one can ever pretend to have the right to preach the Gospel unless he has received his mission from the lawful successors of the Apostles, who are in union with their head, the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

There is a profound meaning in the answer of St. Peter: "Master, we have labored all night and have taken nothing." In the first place observe that we shall always labor in vain if we

labor not with Jesus and with His grace. He who does no work for God and with God loses his time and while he may gain worldly advantages, he gains nothing for Heaven. We should be unfortunate indeed if, at the end of our lives, after having done so much for the world, we were to find that we had gained nothing for eternity. We must admire the obedience of Peter, who, although the time was not favorable, let down his net at the word of his Master. We also should obey him who commands us in God's place, whatever reasons we may have for the contrary.

The events recorded in to-day's Gospel teach us that we should be as anxious to hear the word of God as the multitude that gathered around Jesus. From St. Peter we should learn to obey Jesus Christ, and to humble ourselves when God favors us and makes us the instruments of His wonders. The Apostles who abandoned their ships and nets teach us to abandon the things of this world, to sacrifice our wishes, nay, even our own selves, in order to follow the voice of God when He vouchsafes to call us. Since Jesus has amply instructed the world, He has in a certain sense finished His discourse, so far as we are concerned; let us, therefore launch out into the deep; let us work, and, detaching our hearts from the world, follow the Master on the way to Heaven.

There is a Saint who is honored from pole to pole and whose name is invoked more universally perhaps than that of any other besides the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Antony of Padua is often called "the Wonder Worker," on account of the miracles he performed and still performs every day. The more one knows of him, the more one wishes to know. The better one loves him, the better one desires to love the great Saint whom the Liturgy calls "a violet of humility, a lily of chastity, a rose of divine charity," and whose name, centuries after his death, is honored and revered with a devotion beyond compare.

The child was trained to piety by his God-fearing parents. His mother taught him especially to love the Blessed Virgin, her name was the first word he uttered. And for this reason St. Antony was a devoted servant of Mary all his life. At the age of five he consecrated himself to the Immaculate Mother. Throughout his short life purity and love were his chief traits. His was a spotless soul that never wavered from its first dedication to the Queen of Purity, and his heart overflowed with love for the Divine Babe.

The child was bright and easy to teach. Excellent masters taught him the rudiments of knowledge, profane as well as spiritual. As a flower-bud opens to the sunshine, so the little Antony opened his mind and heart to his teachers. Soon he decided to leave the world and its ambitions and to serve God.

God gave to Antony the power of miracles in a very special degree. It first showed itself when he was a boy at school. Praying one day before the Blessed Sacrament the legend says he was attacked by the devil, and to escape the temptation caused by the tempter, he made the sign of the Cross upon the marble step where he knelt. The evil thought fled, and the stone, yielding to the touch of his hand, received the impress of the miraculous sign. To this day that sacred sign may be seen there, and in that hour his resolve was taken. He vowed himself to the service of God wholly and forever and entered the Franciscan Order.

Antony loved nothing so well as prayer; he never lost his temper; he never told a falsehood; he was always meek and gentle. Beautiful in form and feature, talented in a wonderful degree, he never entertained a thought of pride or vanity; he loved everybody and was loved by all. Duty was ever his first thought; during the time assigned to study, he never left it for prayer, but made his work a constant oblation to God.

St. Francis of Assisi, the Superior General of the Franciscans, ordered that Antony should preach and teach for the rest of his life. So the Saint went from city to city, from village to village, preaching the word of God. He seemed to compel sinners to penance with supernatural power. Often as many as thirty thousand people came to hear him. Once, as the legend relates, a large crowd had collected to hear him preach. They were out in a field because there was no room in any of the churches. Heavy clouds hung overhead, and every moment a heavy rain was expected. The audience looked frightened, and made ready to leave. Antony promised those who remained that they would not get wet. The rain came down in streams and soaked the impatient people who went home, but spared those who had stayed to listen.

But the most touching story of all is that of the Holy Child's visit to St. Antony, which artists have loved to paint. One day Antony was in the palace of a great and good man. Suddenly his room was filled with a light so dazzling that mortal eye could hardly bear its brilliance. In the light there appeared a little child of superhuman beauty. It was the Infant Jesus. He nestled in the Saint's arms and caressed him, just as a loving Babe might do. The lord of the palace came back, and noticed the brilliant light in Antony's room. He entered and asked the Saint what was

wrong. The Saint had a joyful message to give his benefactor. "Jesus revealed to me," he said, "that your house would be prosperous beyond all hope as long as it remains faithful to Catholicity; but if ever it forsakes the faith, it will be overwhelmed with misfortunes." The prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

St. Antony remained in Padua only a year, but thousands were converted there. When he preached, the shops and places of business were closed and people came in crowds to hear him.

Worn out with his labors, Antony finally retired into solitude. After having led a life of contemplation for a while, he was seized with illness, and feeling that the time was nigh when all his hopes were about to be realized, he asked to be taken to the monastery at Padua, that he might die among his brethren. Peacefully and joyously the Saint followed the call on June thirteenth, 1231, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

Pray to St. Antony, the great miracle worker, so that he will help you to find the way to Heaven. The way is narrow and the entrance is small, but Heaven is worth all possible efforts and sacrifices.

The Church commemorates his feast on the thirteenth of June.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"I tell you that, unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (*St. Matthew* v, 20.)

By the first words of this Gospel Christ meant to teach the Apostles, and through them all future Christians, that in order to enter into the kingdom of Heaven it is necessary to be more just and holy than the Pharisees claimed to be. The Jews thought that the Pharisees were holy and just, but their justice and sanctity were fictitious. They were very exact in the observance of the external ceremonies of the law, in making ablutions and paying tithes; but they cared not about the condition of the heart, and thus, while they appeared to be immaculate, they were full of malice and corruption. Hence Christ said that, to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, it was necessary to be more holy than the Pharisees; that is, to be holy in fact, and not merely in appearance.

By the words that follow Christ intended to explain fully and to perfect the commandment that forbids homicide, by forbidding anger, reproachful words, and contempt, which, like so

many steps, lead to the killing of our neighbor.

Every feeling of anger against our neighbor, whether for a grave or a slight reason, is judged by God as deserving of punishment, and He will punish it according to the degree of malice involved. The word *Raca,* according to St. Jerome, is a Hebrew or Syriac word, which means simpleton, scoundrel, etc. Everybody knows that such reproachful words are the first expression of anger, that they tend to increase anger, and are greater sins than the purely internal emotions. Hence Christ says that he who offends his neighbor by such words shall be summoned before the council,—that is, the Sanhedrim, and found guilty according to the greater or lesser malice that dictated his acts. Let us learn from this that God will judge the words we utter against our neighbor. He will weigh all the circumstances; that is, whether we spoke thoughtlessly or purposely, whether we were taken by surprise or acted with full deliberation. He will take into consideration who the offended person is, and who the culprit. God will sentence the sinner according to his malice and impose a temporal or an eternal punishment.

Again, Christ declared him who in anger says to his brother, "Thou fool," guilty of hell-fire. By this parable are understood all those insults or acts of contempt which greatly dishonor our

neighbor. If it is a grievous sin to call another a fool, it is much more sinful to call him a thief, an impostor, or a libertine, as is so often done.

Our Lord commands us to be reconciled to our neighbor whom we have offended as soon as possible, and to give him due satisfaction. The Jews thought they could atone for any sin, even for murder, by making an offering in the Temple. Jesus charged them not to make the offering until they had made peace with their neighbor, which they should do at once. We, also, are bound by this command; and hence, if we have offended a person either in word or deed, we should, before we pray or receive the Sacraments, banish from our heart all angry feeling and as soon as possible give satisfaction and ask pardon of the person whom we have offended. If we have been offended, we must be ready to forgive.

This Gospel brings home to us the fact that if we wish to enter the Kingdom of Heaven we must be truly good; that is, we must have an upright heart, animated by charity, and subject in all things to the Holy Law of God. True justice does not consist in the external practice of devotion, but rather in purity of conscience, self-denial, and self-control. To abstain from anger and from saying anything that might offend or grieve our neighbor, is another lesson we can learn from to-day's Gospel. Lastly, we should not be slow

in making peace with our neighbor whenever we have displeased him and to make it easy for him to approach us if we have been offended.

There is a saint who is called the patron and example of students; his name is ALOYSIUS. You might say, after reading his life that "He was born good, he was always a Saint." It is true he was good from his cradle, but he was not always a Saint. It takes a great many years and a great deal of labor to fashion a Saint. Aloysius had few faults, but the seeds of some were in his heart. When very young, he learned from things which occurred that he was easily excited to anger. Instead of giving way to this vice, he did all he could to correct it, so that he was soon known as a very model of meekness.

The germs of the fear of God and of the love of prayer were implanted in his mind by his pious mother. The holy names of Jesus and Mary were the first words she taught him to speak. He made the sign of the cross before he could walk, and even at that tender age he was fond of folding his tiny hands in the attitude of prayer. When he was able to run about, he would sometimes be missed by his mother, who nearly always found him praying in some quiet corner. The Hail

Mary was the prayer he liked best; he seemed never to tire of repeating it. Once, when asked if he really loved Mary, he looked up in surprise and answered, "Of course I love her; is she not my Mother?"

Nothing pleased him so well as to be allowed to visit and assist the poor. He would leave his play at any time to go with his mother to see a sick person. As the son of a nobleman, he had the finest clothing and every luxury, but he dressed simply, ate little and lived like a Saint.

Although he was full of energy and of a sweet disposition, his mind was mature beyond his years. Very early he began to realize what sin was, and hated it in every form. Once his father took him to camp where he learned some wicked words, the meaning of which he did not understand. When he returned home his tutor heard him repeat these words, and chided him for it, explaining what they meant. Aloysius never forgot this lesson and bewailed his mistake to the end of his life.

He went to Holy Communion every Sunday, dividing the rest of the week into two parts—Thursday, Friday and Saturday he prayed to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost for the grace to receive worthily; Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday he thanked God for the graces he had received on Sunday.

He also made a practice of going about to the

schools of Christian doctrine, encouraging poor boys, and helping them to learn their Catechism. At this time he was not more than thirteen years old. While he was one of the pages to the King of Spain, his piety and purity were so wonderful that it became a saying among the other pages that Aloysius did not seem to be made of flesh and blood.

From his birth to the time he became a Jesuit, the boy was surrounded with servants. They ministered to him everywhere. He spoke to them all as if they were brothers. He did not like to command others and seldom asked for anything. When he became a religious he tried to do the hardest and most disagreeable work. He helped in the kitchen, washed the dishes, collected the scraps for the poor, swept the rooms, and went about removing cobwebs and dirt. For a long time he had charge of the lamps in the passages and rooms; he had to clean them and fill them with oil. The business of attending to the lamps was no small job, as there was nothing but oil in those days, and that not of the finest kind.

Not long before Aloysius died a terrible pestilence broke out in Rome, and the Saint got leave to nurse the sick. The Roman plague hospital was a terrible place. Aloysius became a servant, taking upon himself the care of those patients who were the least attractive. The servers' work was to wash and wait upon the

sick, to cleanse their wounds, and perform the most revolting services for them. All this did Aloysius with superhuman love and tenderness.

That was the last great work Aloysius performed on earth. The terrible experience in the hospital undermined his health; he caught the disease and died a few weeks later. With the blessed name of Jesus on his lips he expired a little after midnight, on the twenty-first of June, the Octave of Corpus Christi, being a little over twenty-three years of age.

His body lies in the chapel of the Gesù church in Rome, and the room in which he prayed and worked is still shown in the Jesuit College.

Saint Aloysius is a model of piety and innocence. Honor this angelic Saint.

Holy Church commemorates his feast on the twenty-first of June.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days and have nothing to eat . . . for some of them come from afar off." (*St. Mark* viii, 2, 3.)

In the multitude we recognize Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, by the vocation of Abraham and the law of Moses, were on the way to meet the Saviour, and were very near to Him, because He was to be born in their midst. The Gentiles on the other hand, were far removed from Him, because their ignorance, superstition, and immorality made them strangers to God. Yet they also came to hear Christ, they experienced the effects of His mercy, were fed with His doctrine, and nourished with the food of life. Those persons who came from afar off represent the sinners who came, as it were, from afar off, hesitatingly drawing near to hear the word of God. They find God disposed to be merciful to them, ready to feed them with the bread of His grace, that they may not grow faint on the road they still have to travel.

We must admire the depth of Christ's love for our souls. We live on this earth as in a desert, where there is nothing to satisfy our souls. But

Christ does not forget our misery; He knows even our least wants and provides abundantly for them.

All that Christ did to the multitude in this day's gospel He also does to us. He feels sorry for the people, and consults with His Apostles about the food supply. He has the little food they had taken with them placed before Him, and commands the apostles to distribute it with the utmost care, giving so abundantly that seven baskets full of fragments remained. Similarly Jesus watches over our souls, weighing and measuring the needs of each one, having pity upon all, and enriching all with His doctrines, His graces, His Sacraments, His body, and His merits. All this He does through the ministry of His priests, without regard to person, sex, or age. He provides all with abundant means to live faithfully in this world and to be happy with Him in the next.

The seven loaves signify the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Jesus makes use of these gifts to preserve the life of our soul, to strengthen it in the midst of dangers, to assist it in overcoming temptations, and in growing in virtue toward Christian perfection.

Those fishes, which served to render the bread more agreeable to the taste, signify the graces that make easier the observance of the divine word, which is the ordinary food of our soul.

The joy our heart feels in doing good, the confidence that supports us in leading a Christian life in the midst of difficulties,—these are the exquisite food which renders the observance of the Commandments easy and pleasant to us.

To make good use of these spiritual nourishments we must pray God to give and preserve in us the gift of His habitual grace. We must receive His favors with humility and a deep sense of gratitude. We must put into practice the instructions which we have received and always be obedient to the lawful successors of the Apostles, who are the dispensers of the food of life.

St. Mark in the Gospel of this day brings home to us a very practical lesson, namely, to esteem the word of God highly, and to be eager to hear the same. Furthermore, we are to learn to have compassion for our brethren who are in want, and, as Christ used the bread reserved for Himself and for the Apostles to feed the people, so also should we take pleasure in depriving ourselves of something in order to help the poor.

It is only when people have found out how delightful prayer is, that they can understand why the Saints prayed so much. It is like two persons eating. One is well and enjoys his food; he can

take a good quantity and relish all he takes; he looks forward to his meals and takes an interest in them. The other is ill; he dislikes the taste, smell, sight of things to eat; can only take a small quantity, and feels no better for it.

Imperfect, tepid people are more or less like this invalid. They do not relish prayer; they get bored, are not interested; they do only what is absolutely necessary. The Saints are like the sound person, eager for the time of prayer, making as much of it as possible, turning it to good account, and most happy when they are at prayer. We will not look upon the Saints as a queer lot, but just remember that the difference between them and us is as between a sound person and an invalid, and it is our business to get well as soon as possible.

Many boys are called Robert and if they want to imitate their patron Saint, they must be prayerful and good to the poor.

St. Robert in his childhood disliked the usual amusements of small boys; he even shrank from the company of his fellows, and would rather read and pray than play and amuse himself. He spent his time in serious reading and pious employments. He often deprived himself of food to feed Christ's poor. He longed to give up all things and to lead a very unselfish life. In order to practice the holy virtue of poverty more perfectly, he became a Benedictine monk.

When Robert had been a priest for some years, he left the monastery with twelve others to live a still harder life. They settled on the river Skeld and built themselves huts of hurdles with turf for the roof. During the winter months that followed, St. Robert and his companions suffered great hardships on account of their absolute poverty; but amidst all these trials they were always bright and cheerful. Although they were very poor, yet they always had something to give to those who came begging to their hut. The people of the neighborhood were so grateful to them that they used to say that the Fathers were more like angels than men.

God provided for His monks. After two trying years He sent them a rich novice, called Hugh, who brought all his money with him, and then the monks began to build a splendid abbey, called "Fountains" because of the clear springs on the grounds. It is still an exquisite spot with running water, rich vegetation, and stately beeches. Of the monastery only the ruins are to be seen now, but the loveliness of the place can still be admired, as it was in the time of these holy monks.

There St. Robert lived for many years among his brethren. They labored hard and slept little, but they were happy and joyful. And St. Robert was the happiest of all, because he was the most holy.

One Easter Sunday a great crowd had come to

the gates of the monastery as usual. They had received their share of food and good things and had gone away joyfully. St. Robert himself had been at the gate serving them as was his wont. When the last guests had gone, he and the brothers went to the refectory, for it was meal time. Robert could hardly eat anything. The brethren pressed him, but he had fasted so long that he could bear no solid food. After a great deal of persuasion the monks made him take a little bread and honey. It was brought to him on a plate. He looked at it, smiled, shook his head, and bade a Brother carry it to the gate and give it to the poor. A young man with a shining face took the gift and disappeared.

The Brother returned to St. Robert and told him about this last poor guest, to whom he had given the honey. Robert was pleased when he heard about the youth and thought that perhaps this grateful stranger was going to take the honey to some little brother or sister at home. This thought delighted Robert, for he was very fond of children.

At the next meal, when the monks were again gathered together in the refectory, with St. Robert, their Abbot, just as "Grace" was being said Our Divine Lord permitted them to witness a most gracious miracle. The plate which had been given to the poor descended slowly from heaven and gently dropped in front of the Abbot's place.

The plate was empty, to indicate that Robert's Easter offering had been accepted by God.

When St. Robert died his soul was seen rising up to Heaven, and a voice was heard saying: "Enter now, my friend."

St. Robert's feast is kept on the ninth of June.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (*St. Matthew* vii, 15.)

The word prophet means a person who, inspired by God, announces future events. The name was given also to those holy men who, in the name of God, taught religion to the Jewish people, and corrected, advised, and consoled them unto eternal life.

As we can call a good and learned man, who instructs the people in their religion and corrects their faults, a prophet, so we must call him a false prophet who, moved by passion, misleads his neighbors by teaching doctrines contrary to faith and good morals. Jesus exhorts us to beware of those false teachers who spread error and immorality. Such false prophets among the Jews were the scribes and doctors who endeavored to keep men away from Christ. False prophets in regard to us are all those who, under the appearance of zeal for religion, strive to spread doctrines which do not harmonize with the spirit of the Gospel.

The scribes and doctors were very exact in the

exterior observance of the Law. They appeared to be full of zeal. They were looked upon by the people as models of sanctity. But in reality they were wolves in sheep's clothing. They were filled with envy and hatred; they were hypocrites and they cruelly sent Christ to the cross. Such, also, have been the heretics and teachers of iniquity. They pretended to have an ardent zeal for man's welfare by wishing to reform his heart, and on this account they appear as lambs. But if you examine their manner of living you will find that they are moved by the spirit of hatred and by sensuality, trying to draw you from God.

As trees are known by their fruit, so are false prophets known by their works. Thorns will not bring forth grapes, nor can you gather figs from thistles. In the same manner a corrupt heart cannot produce good actions. If a hypocrite does something now and then that is good in itself, you will in a short time discover the evil motive beneath his actions. A man's style of dress, his conversation, his recreations, his amusements, his friendships, etc., plainly show the true condition of his heart. A humble, modest, and devout person who fears God, will, as a rule, not commit sins against those beautiful virtues, unless surprised by human frailty. But a proud, dissolute, and avaricious person will fall at the slightest occasion and reveal his true self.

It is not enough to abstain from evil. God ex-

pects us to practice the Christian virtues and to correspond with the graces He gives us. Call to mind the tree that was ordered to be cut down because, though covered with rich foliage, it brought no fruit. Woe to us if we are Christians only in appearance, and do not bring forth the fruit of good actions!

Christ says that not every man who calls Him, Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of His Father. Many Christians flatter themselves that they please God because they daily say a certain number of prayers, assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and are always present at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. All this is of no account if we do not observe the law of God. True devotion consists in the perfect denial of ourselves in all things and unquestioning submission to the will of God. He who observes the law of the Gospel in all things will enter into Paradise, but he whose devotion consists in mere words will be excluded from the number of the elect.

When God calls us to give an account of our life here on earth, He is not going to ask what profession or craft we have followed, but in what way and by what means we have tried to do His holy will. No matter what our employment, we can rest assured of eternal salvation if we serve God faithfully in word and deed.

Outside the city of Sinope there lived a wealthy gardener, who spent all his time tilling, sowing, and planting. His labor was well repaid by good crops, which he shared with the poor and wayfaring travellers. He lived the life of a hermit and exercised charity toward his fellowmen. The name of this gardener was PHOCAS.

Joining prayer with his labors, Phocas found his garden an instructive book. A well-kept garden presents charms to all the senses, by the fragrance of its flowers, by the riches of its produce, and the sweetness and variety of its fruits. In this little world of God's bounty and goodness Phocas was wont to raise his heart to God in raptures of love and praise. It excited him to tears of compunction when he considered the ingratitude of mankind. His house was open to all strangers and travellers who had no lodging; and after having for many years most liberally bestowed his labor on the poor, he was found worthy to give his life for Christ. Though his profession was obscure, he was well known over the whole country for his charity and virtue.

During a cruel persecution under Diocletian, Phocas was impeached as a Christian, and execu-

tioners were dispatched with an order to kill him wherever they should find him.

One day he heard the tramping of feet some distance from his house. He listened; the steps came nearer. As the men approached, Phocas was able to see Roman soldiers, probably in quest of some criminal. He went out to meet them and graciously offered them hospitality for the night. The soldiers were taken with his manner and told him they were in search of a certain Christian by name of Phocas. They had orders to hunt him down and kill him without waiting for a trial, so odious were his crimes to the Emperor. Phocas listened, smiled, and said nothing. With his own hands he prepared a hearty meal, waited upon his guests, and entertained them with cheerful discourse. Finally he told them he was well acquainted with Phocas and would tell them more about him in the morning. When they were in bed, he went out into his garden and dug his own grave. The rest of the night he spent in prayer. In the morning he called his guests and gave them breakfast. When they had finished their meal, he told them Phocas was in their power whenever they pleased to kill him. Glad at this news, they inquired where he was. "He is here," said the martyr; "I am Phocas." The soldiers were struck with sorrow; how could they put to death one who had done them nothing but good; so heroic a virtue made them speechless. But

Phocas told them that death was a gain for him, because he longed to go to his Lord. At length, recovering from their surprise, they struck off his head. A moment's pain brought the generous martyr to his Master's side. After peace was restored to the Church the Christians of that city built a great church in honor of St. Phocas which became famous over all the East.

The Roman Calendar has his feast on July the third.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods." (*St. Luke* xvi, 1.)

With this parable Christ intended to rebuke the avarice of the Pharisees, who abused their worldly goods. He also advised us to make good use of riches, especially when they have been acquired by violating the law of God and offending His Divine Majesty.

The steward of this parable was entrusted with the management of a large estate. As this was not his, he had no right to do with it as he pleased, to neglect or squander it, and for this reason, when he showed himself untrustworthy, was dismissed. This steward is a figure of ourselves. We control the treasures which God has confided to our care. Life, health, talent, beauty, nobility, riches, all that we have, are so many trusts that God has placed in our hands, which we are to manage according to the law laid down by Him. Whenever, therefore, we make a different use of these goods, we are guilty of unfaithfulness, like the servant in the Gospel. Alas! What use have we made of our worldly possessions, of our health, of our talents?

The master, having learned of the steward's unfaithfulness, asks him for an account of his stewardship, and gives him notice that he is dismissed from office. Thus God will one day call upon us to render an account of the use we have made of His gifts, temporal and spiritual, and from that moment we shall no longer have the use of them. God will sit in judgment over us at the moment of death. What a terrible moment that will be for many unfaithful Christians!

The words of the steward are suitable to us. He knew that he could not continue in office. He thought the situation over and came to the conclusion that he could not do any hard work and was ashamed to beg. When we are dying it will be too late to make up for lost time; we cannot recover the heavenly gifts we have abused. The time for doing penance is over. We can no longer invoke the help of a merciful God or the protection of the Saints. The days of justice and reward or punishment commence.

The master praised the unjust steward on account of the prudence he had displayed in providing for the future by making friends for himself. Christ hereby teaches us to think seriously of the future and to prevent misfortune to our souls.

In conclusion Our Lord said: "Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into ever-

lasting dwellings." By these words He commands us to think betimes of our future wants, and to make friends for ourselves in Heaven by making good use of the worldly goods we possess; that is, by doing works of mercy. Worldly possessions are sometimes acquired by unjust means; for instance, by fraud, theft, usury. Sometimes our ancestors, parents, or we ourselves have gained them by greed or over-anxiety, and thereby have turned our hearts away from God. In either case they deserve to be called fruits of iniquity. We all know that we are bound in justice to return whatever we have obtained by fraud or theft. Christ here admonishes us to use that which has been amassed by sinful anxiety in performing works of mercy, helping the poor, offering sacrifice for the dead, honoring the saints, so that, like influential friends, they may plead for us before the throne of God and receive us into the everlasting dwellings.

All men desire peace, but only those enjoy it who are completely dead to themselves and bear all things for Christ. The characteristic virtue of St. Elizbeth of Portugal was an ardent love of peace. Christ, the Prince of Peace, declares His spirit to be the spirit of humility and meek-

ness, and consequently of peace. To find the way of peace we must be meek and patient; we must never resent wrong, but do good for evil. *"Blessed are the peacemakers,"* and all who love and cultivate this virtue among men, for *"they shall be called the children of God,"* whose badge and image they bear.

Elizabeth's father was careful to surround his daughter with virtuous persons whose example might be to her a constant spur to virtue. The young princess was of a sweet disposition, and from her tenderest years had no relish for anything but what would promote piety and devotion. It gave her the greatest pleasure if any one promised to lead her to some chapel to say a prayer. At eight years she began to fast and practice self-denial.

At a very early age she was married to the king of Portugal. He loved her because she was beautiful, rich, royal, and witty. As queen, she was very kind to the poor, visited the sick, served them, and dressed and kissed their sores.

Her husband was a wicked man, who followed his evil passions wherever they led him. The queen bore her lot patiently, sought to please her ungrateful husband and never let her prayers or good deeds stand in the way of her duty. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, she daily found strength to bear her cruel sufferings.

The king was a very jealous man. Being ad-

dicted to evil himself, he suspected the queen of infidelity. One day a wicked page accused Elizabeth of favoring a certain young attendant too much. The king believed the slanderer and conceived a diabolical hatred for the innocent page. One morning he visited a lime-kiln and ordered the lime-burner to throw into the furnace the youth who should come to him with the question, "Have you fulfilled the king's command?"—for that messenger would well deserve an awful death, he said. Shortly afterward the king despatched the queen's page to ask the fatal question, and impatiently awaited the result. Two hours passed, and no message had come from the kiln. Dionysius could bear the suspense no longer. He called the calumniator, and bid him go to the lime-burner and ask whether he had done the king's command. The page ran to the kiln in breathless haste. No sooner did the lime-burner catch sight of him and hear his message, than he seized him and threw him into the furnace.

Not long after, the queen's page came to the king with a bright face and sparkling eyes. The lime-burner had done the king's command, he said. The king grew pale with fear. Was this an apparition! a soul come back from the grave! He questioned the boy. Where had he been? How came he back from the furnace? The page told how he had first gone to hear Mass in the

church, how he had waited for a second and a third Mass, according to his custom, but when these were over he had hastened to do the King's command. When he asked his question, the lime-burner had pointed to the furnace and grinned unpleasantly. Then Dionysius knew that a greater than he had judged and punished the true offender. He was sorry for his sin, and ever after showed his love and veneration for his saintly wife. It was she who nursed him in his last sickness, and prepared him for death.

St. Elizabeth died at the age of sixty-five, after having received the Holy Viaticum on her knees and shortly after Extreme Unction. Her favorite prayer was: "Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy, defend us from the wicked enemy, and receive us at the hour of our death."

Her feast is celebrated on July the eighth.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"When Jesus drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it." (*St. Luke* xix, 41.)

How could Jesus weep? Tears are generally considered to be a sign of weakness, but sometimes they are a token of great love. The latter was the case with Jesus Christ. At beholding that unfortunate city, He thought of her blindness, obstinacy, and ingratitude for the many favors which God had bestowed upon her. He thought of the divine anger which she had provoked, and of the afflictions that would one day befall her on account of her crimes. Moved by compassion, He shed tears over her unhappy fate.

The prophecy with regard to Jerusalem was fulfilled to the letter. Forty years after the death of the Redeemer that city was surrounded by the army of Titus, shut off from all communication, divided by barriers, oppressed by pestilence, hunger, and thirst, and crushed by unheard-of horrors and misery. People seeking safety by flight jumped from the walls and were killed by the fall or put to death by the Roman soldiery. Bloody contests between the factions frequently took place in the public squares and streets. Hu-

man bodies were decaying, the old were dying of hunger, and mothers in despair ate the flesh of their own children. Phantom armies were seen waging war in the heavens, and in the Temple the voices of angels were heard, crying: "Let us depart hence, let us depart." The Romans finally entered the city, sprinkled the streets with blood, set the houses and the Temple on fire and reduced the whole city to ashes.

Jerusalem is the figure of the hardened sinner who does not profit by the grace of God, by remorse of conscience, by the counsels of his friends, and by the exhortations of the ministers of the Church. In remaining obstinate and resisting the call of divine mercy, he exposes himself to the danger of being finally abandoned by God.

When an obstinate sinner is abandoned by God, bad habits, the occasions of sin, and human respect so control him that he is almost forced to commit sin and is unable to amend his life. A perfect chaos reigns in his heart. He wishes to be at peace with God, but he also wants to sin. He would like to enjoy peace of heart, but he also wants to gratify his passions. He fails in good works, is deprived of spiritual help, and carried away by corruption; he cares no longer for friends, parents, family, or even for himself. Finally the thought of the punishment due to his iniquities causes him to despair. He dies, and

from temporal he passes to eternal suffering.

It is the greatest misfortune to close our eyes to the voice of God when He comes to us with His grace. We should, therefore, profit by the call and invitation of the Lord while we have time, so that He may not abandon us as He abandoned the ungrateful people of Jerusalem.

It is related that Jesus cast out of the Temple those who were carrying on a profane traffic there. From this we are to learn that we provoke Christ when we seek anything in the House of the Lord but God. If we go to church out of mere habit or curiosity, or to while away the time; if we are distracted and irreverent; if we go to see or to be seen; if, in a word, we act like sinners in the House of God, we deserve to be driven out and to feel the weight of God's anger, for He is jealous of His House, where He expects our adoration and dispenses His mercies.

Holy Scripture admonishes us: "Love your enemies, and do good to those that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be children of your Father who is in Heaven." Christ not only commanded us to pardon all offences, but recommended this precept to us with His expiring breath, His head

crowned with thorns and His hands stretched out for us. We renounce the glorious title of being His disciples if we bear malice against a brother whom our dying Saviour commands us to forgive for His sake.

The heroic act which merited for St. John Gualbert the grace of conversion, was forgiveness extended to an enemy. Let us imitate him in this virtue, resolving never to revenge ourselves in deed, word, or thought. John had an only brother, whom he loved passionately. The two had been brought up with great care and taught to love God. As he grew up, John forgot many of the holy things he had learned in his Catechism and followed his own inclinations. He loved pleasure, was proud of his high birth, and did not attend properly to his religious duties. Now, this is a dangerous way of living, for there is sure to come a time when a big temptation arises in the mind, then a sacrifice has to be made or a sin will be committed. The temptation came to John when he learned that his only brother had been murdered. White with passion, John declared that he would never rest until he had taken the murderer's life, and revenge became the absorbing thought of his life.

One Good Friday John was riding with his servant home to Florence. They came to a narrow pass and John saw another horseman advancing.

He recognized him at once; it was his brother's murderer. John drew his sword and rushed upon his enemy. But the other, alighting from his horse, threw himself upon his knees, and begged for mercy,—begged it for the sake of the Redeemer who had died that day for their sake. John's heart was softened. Christ stretched upon the Cross had prayed for His murderers. How was he to withhold pardon from one who had asked it in His name? He raised the unfortunate man from the ground and said: "I can refuse nothing that is asked of me in the name of Jesus Christ. I not only give you your life, but also my friendship forever. Pray that God may forgive me my sins."

They parted. John went straight to a nearby church and at the foot of the crucifix poured out his heart, praying God to forgive him his sins. Then a miracle happened. The figure of Our Lord moved; the arms were loosened, stretched out and embraced the kneeling penitent.

The divine grace made such a deep impression on his heart, that, rising from his devotions, he cast himself at the feet of the abbot, begging him to be admitted into the religious order. He was allowed to live in the community in his secular dress. After a few days John cut off his hair and put on a habit, which he had borrowed. He subdued his body with much fasting, never gave way

to idleness, but kept himself employed day and night in prayer. He founded an Order of his own and established many monasteries.

The twelfth of July is the day set aside for his feast.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee and the other a publican." (*St. Luke* xviii, 10.)

By this parable the Divine Saviour wanted to teach those who were present, as well as all future Christians, how necessary it is to close our eyes to our own merits and virtues in order to avoid falling into the sin of pride. He assures us that only the humble of heart are pleasing to God, and they alone obtain His favors.

The Pharisee is a true figure of a man filled with conceit and pride. He boasted that he was not like other people; that he had no faults or vices, but that he practiced virtue and was faithful in the observance of the law. And while he praised himself, he condemned the poor publican. Such is the proud man. He alone is learned, prudent, skilful; he alone is the model according to which all should shape their actions; he alone is deserving of esteem, honors, and preferment. If others will not praise him, he will do it himself; and when he aspires to an office of honor, he does not scruple to calumniate others, to be cruel, and to deceive. The proud man sacrifices all to

his evil passion, which he persists in gratifying at any cost.

The practical lesson we are to draw from this parable is to avoid the vice of pride and not to rely on our own good qualities, if we happen to have any, lest, like the Pharisee, we become an object of aversion to God. To avoid this vice let us bear in mind that the proud man is odious to heaven and earth, and that, as St. Peter says, God resists the proud and covers them with confusion, as He did Lucifer, the sons of Babel, Holofernes, and many others.

If we have any good qualities we should remember that they do not belong to us, but are gifts of God. He can deprive us of them at any time if He so pleases. On the other hand, who is certain whether he deserves love or hatred, notwithstanding the good testimony of his conscience? Consider the fallen angels. As soon as they listened to suggestions of pride, God withdrew His grace from them, and they had to exchange Heaven for hell. It was pride that induced our First Parents to eat of the forbidden fruit, thereby bringing sin and misery upon themselves and their whole posterity. We should not be too confident in glorifying our own good qualities. In the eyes of God even the stars of heaven are not pure.

The publican is a figure of the sinner who, by the grace of God knows his failings, humbles him-

self, and asks for mercy. He dared not even lift his eyes to heaven, and God looked down on him with the eyes of a father. He asks for mercy, and God, besides forgiving him his sins, bestows on him His benedictions and many graces. Let us learn from the publican not to hide our sins, but to acknowledge them humbly and contritely. On our knees let us confess to God that we are unworthy of His favors and hope to obtain them only through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ.

There are many reasons why we should be humble. We should consider what we are, and what we shall be, both in regard to soul and body. In regard to the body we were once nothing; now we are a clod of earth, subject to many miseries, and one day we shall be a heap of bones and ashes. In regard to the soul, we were once slaves of the devil, vessels of wrath deserving of hell, now we are in need of everything. We are poor sinners, exposed to all kinds of dangers, and one day God will judge whether we shall be rewarded with the Saints in Heaven or punished with the reprobates in hell.

Alms given to the poor remain with us forever. They are a treasure transferred to Heaven, with the surety of an immense reward. St. Alexis

was the only son of a rich senator in Rome. Through the example of his pious parents he learned to love the poor. Whilst yet a child, not content to give all he had, he left nothing unattempted to provide relief for all whom he saw in distress. The manner in which he distributed his alms indicated his noble sentiments. He felt himself deeply obliged to those who received his charity and regarded them as his greatest benefactors. The more he raised his thoughts and desires to the bright scene of immortal bliss, the more did he learn to despise all earthly toys. When once the soul is on the wing and soars upwards, the glory of the world lessens in its eyes.

After he had become a young man, Alexis thought of renouncing the advantages of his birth and retiring from the more dangerous part of the world. In compliance with the wish of his parents, he married a rich and virtuous Roman lady. On his wedding-night, by God's special inspiration, he secretly left Rome and, in disguise, boarded a ship bound for Edessa in the far East. He gave away all that he had brought with him, content thenceforth to live in extreme poverty at the gate of the church of Our Lady in that city.

For seventeen years the young man lived in a hut adjoining the church dedicated to the Mother of God, supported by the alms of the faithful. It came to pass that the servants whom his father had sent in search of Alexis, arrived at Edessa,

and seeing him among the poor at the gate of Our Lady's church, gave him an alms, not recognizing him. Whereupon the man of God, rejoicing, said: "I thank Thee, O Lord, who has called me and granted that I should receive for Thy name's sake an alms from my own slaves. Deign to fulfill in me the work Thou hast begun." When he discovered that he had become a person of distinction, he once more sought obscurity by flight. On his way to Tarsus contrary winds drove his ship to Rome. There is no one recognized in the wan and tattered mendicant the heir of one of Rome's noblest houses.

From his father's charity he begged an obscure corner of the palace as a place of shelter and lived on table scraps. Thus he spent seventeen years, bearing patiently the mockery and ill-usage of his own slaves, and witnessing daily the grief of his spouse and his parents. Only when death had ended his cruel martyrdom, did they learn from a letter in his own handwriting whom they had unknowingly sheltered. God bore testimony to His servant's sanctity by many miracles. He died early in the fifth century.

The feast of Saint Alexis is celebrated on the seventeenth of July.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb; and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him." (*St. Mark* vii, 32.)

THE dumb man was a figure of the human race, which by the sin of Adam was rendered unable to hear the message of salvation and to pronounce the words that would redound to the glory of God and the good of souls.

Christ used His finger and His own spittle on the deaf and dumb man. The finger signifies Divine Omnipotence, the spittle, Divine Wisdom. By so doing Christ gave us to understand that in order to open the ears and loosen the tongue of the soul is the work of the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost would not have done this work if the Eternal Wisdom, made man, had not merited forgiveness and grace for us by His passion and death.

Before Christ performed this miracle, He looked up to heaven and groaned. By groaning He made clear to us how deplorable is the condition of mankind, which through its own fault, has become deaf and dumb in regard to God. By looking up to heaven He asked the mercy and

power of the Eternal Father to cure the afflicted man.

Consider how a Christian, by virtue of Baptism, has his ears opened to the voice of Heaven, and how he speaks of God, and you will see realized the prodigy that "He spoke right." If we hear the voice that invites us to do good and abstain from evil; if we hear the voice that reproaches us for our faults and encourages us in the exercise of virtue; if we confess our weakness and praise God, all this is a prodigy of that finger of grace which opened our ears to hear the truth and loosed our tongue to speak words of salvation.

A Christian who is hardened in sin is sometimes deaf and dumb. He does not acknowledge his guilt, he does not pray to God or praise Him, and whilst he talks much of the things of the world, he is mute about the things of God. Besides, by remaining obstinate in his sins, he does not hear the voice of grace. Just like a deaf man who does not profit by the words spoken to him, even, for his own good, he draws no profit from counsel, advice, or correction.

Christ forbade the people to make this miracle known. Thereby He wishes to teach us not to seek human praise and reward when we have done a good work. By putting to good use the natural and supernatural gifts we have received from God, we surely can do great things for the glory of

God, for the good of society, and for our neighbors' welfare. Fully conscious of having done our duty, we must not publish our merit to the world; we must not look for human reward; we must avoid all praise, and say to ourselves, as Jesus commands us, that we are useless servants.

Let us do all the good we can, but let us evade the applause of men and expect our reward from God. After the example of the multitude we are not bound to keep silence when our benefactors are concerned, even should their modesty command us to do so. Let us praise their virtue, let us show our gratitude and publish their good works, when it will serve as a good example to society, and when it is for the greater glory of God.

The great mystery of the cross is the practice of humility, patience, meekness, and charity; which art is to be learned only by the good use of severe interior and exterior trials. The prosperity of the wicked will appear at the last day to have often been the most dreadful judgment; whilst on the contrary, it will then become manifest to all men that the afflictions of the Saints have been the greatest favor of divine mercy.

Thus by a chain of temporal disasters did God lay in the soul of St. Vincent de Paul the solid foundation of that high virtue to which He afterwards raised him.

God raised Saint Vincent at a time when the true maxims of the Gospel seemed almost forgotten. By mortification and the gift of prayer he became a vessel of God's grace, and filled with the spirit of the Apostles, he was able to conduct many others on the path of heroic virtue.

The parents of St. Vincent were good, simple peasants, who owned a small farm. Vincent was the third of a family of four sons and two daughters, who were brought up in innocence and inured to hard labor. He was a bright, thoughtful boy, and from his infancy showed a seriousness and an affection for prayer far beyond his age. He spent a great part of his time in pious exercises when he was employed to herd the cattle in the fields. That he might give to Christ in the persons of the poor all that was in his power, he deprived himself of many conveniences. This early devotion to God, and the sacrifices he made, were indications of the sincere ardor with which he began to seek God from his youth, to know and to love Him. No doubt the Author of all graces showered down upon him many blessings.

As he early gave promise of greatness, his father gave him the advantage of a higher educa-

tion. After he had finished his studies he was ordained to the priesthood. God, to try Vincent, put him through the fire of affliction.

Soon after his ordination, he was captured by African pirates and carried to Barbary, where he fell into the hands of a renegade Christian. He converted him after a time, and they made their escape together. The converted apostate became a true penitent.

Vincent was appointed chaplain-general of the galleys of France. His charity brought hope into prisons where despair had hitherto reigned. Whilst he was at the convict prison, he was saddened by the spectacle of a young galley slave taking farewell of his old mother. The tears and sufferings of mother and son were more than Vincent could bear, especially when the poor mother appealed to him for help. Vincent, without thinking of the consequences, contrived that the man should escape and himself took his place in the galleys.

His charity embraced all poor people, young and old. A poor, ignorant, and degraded man was to him the image of Him who became as "a leper and no man." "Turn the medal," he said, "and you will see Jesus Christ." He wandered through Paris at night, seeking the children who were left on the streets to die. Once robbers rushed upon him, thinking he carried a treasure, but when he opened his cloak, they recognized

him and his burden, and fell humbly at his feet.

St. Vincent was not only the Saviour of the poor, but also of the rich, for he taught them to perform works of mercy. Like St. Philip, he knew the power of association. He made them do good in the sight of others in order to spread the "sacred contagion" of charity.

He founded the Society of St. Vincent, the Priests of the Missions, and also the Sisters of Charity, all of whom perpetuate the Saint's memory and glorify God in every country in the world. He established hospitals for orphans, poor old men, and galley-slaves. When he died, the world and religion felt that a truly great man was gone—that the apostle of charity, the friend of the orphan, the cripple, the foundling, the helpless, and the galley-slave was no more.

The Church celebrates his feast on the nineteenth of July.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them." (*St. Luke* x, 24.)

The Apostles saw in Jesus Christ the Eternal Word, the only-begotten Son of the living God, the Messias promised to the Patriarchs, foretold by the Prophets, and the expected of nations. Ignorant and carnal men saw in Him only the son of a carpenter, an obscure Nazarene, a son of Adam like all the rest of men.

The Apostles heard truths till then unknown, and words of eternal life not understood and not believed by the great majority of those who followed the Divine Master.

The kings and prophets who lived and died before Christ, believing and hoping in the future Messias, desired to see Him and His miracles which had been foretold. But they were prevented by death from enjoying the longed-for consolation.

All Christians, and especially we who live among so many that have fallen into schism and heresy, share this privilege with the Apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the Man of Nazareth, we see by the eyes of faith the Saviour of mankind. In His miracles we see the divinity of His doctrine confirmed. In His manner of living we see the model we are to imitate. His words are not unintelligible to us, as they were to many of His contemporaries. We understand them as the Apostles did, because from them and their rightful successors we have learned their true and sublime sense.

The man who fell among the robbers is an image of the human race, which through disobedience, fell from the state of grace into a state of sin. The human race fell under the power of the infernal robbers, who, having deprived it of its original innocence and grace, wounded in intellect, heart, and will, left it on the road to perish, unable to rise again.

The human race was wounded but not dead. This means that it was not lost beyond redemption, like the bad angels, who, having sinned once, were condemned to eternal woe. The wound of mankind was mortal, but it could be cured. But the cure could be effected only by the Good Samaritan,—that is, the Eternal Word, a stranger to us because He is God, and the only faithful Guardian of our soul, because, loving us from all eternity, He has watched and watches over our welfare.

Jesus Christ was the true Samaritan, the Eter-

nal Guardian, and Saviour of men, a stranger to us before His incarnation, like unto us with the exception of sin. He became a pilgrim and dwelt among us by becoming man; He looked with compassion on the human race, and undertook the great task of healing and restoring it to life.

This Divine Samaritan, in order to heal our wounds, first assumed our nature. He treated our spiritual wounds with the oil of grace and the wine of heavenly charity. He bound up these wounds with the bandages of His holy law, and He brought us to the inn of salvation, suffering in His humanity the punishment due to the sinner, and bringing us back, by His passion and death, to the bosom of Holy Church, where we are under the protection of His ministers, whose office it is to heal our infirmities and prepare us for eternal life. To His priests He gave two most efficient means of providing for our wants. These means are: instruction and the Sacraments. By the first we are enabled to know what we should believe and what we should do; by the second, to regain grace if we have lost it, or to increase it if we already possess it.

The generosity of the Good Samaritan is clearly shown in these words: "Whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee." He left men in the care of the priests, His ministers, and they in His name must provide for their eternal welfare. If they do more

than what they are strictly bound to do, they will receive a special reward from Him. This also includes all who do more for their neighbor's welfare than they are in duty bound to do.

A parent, a teacher, an employer, a superior, a sovereign, who is not content with simply doing his duty toward those confided to his care, but endeavors to promote their spiritual welfare and their progress in virtue with extraordinary zeal, will undoubtedly receive a special reward from Jesus Christ.

Constant union of the heart with God is the shortest road to perfection. Those who are engaged in the active life, should learn the art of constantly living in the Divine Presence. If we love God truly, we shall, like the great St. Ignatius, acquire the holy habit of living in His presence, and conversing with Him as a child with his father, banish from our hearts all that can distract us. This glorious Saint devoted himself to exalting the glory of God and spreading that fire which Christ came to kindle, over the whole world.

He served his king as a courtier and a soldier till his thirtieth year. At that age, being laid low by a wound, he received the call of divine grace to leave the world and follow Christ.

On reading the Life of Christ and the Saints, the memory of his childhood, when he was on intimate terms with Jesus and His Blessed Mother, came back to Ignatius like the melody of an old song. The holy books awakened in his heart a passion for the spiritual combat, where the stakes were not principalities and powers, but the Eternal Kingdom. He felt that he had been disloyal to the True King. His mind was made up. For the future he should be a soldier of the Cross, ready to fight and to die for the greatest cause of all.

He devoted himself entirely to the love of Jesus Christ. Whatever he knew to be pleasing to Christ, that he did. He sacrificed everything that could separate him from Jesus Christ. He embraced poverty and humiliation in order that he might become more like to Jesus. He loved Jesus so ardently that he won over others to join him in serving God.

His great humility became manifest in the days when he began to study Latin. He was thirty-three years of age and his fellow pupils were young boys, who were inclined to laugh at the attempts of one so old to acquire the rudiments of the Latin tongue. Ignatius was often distracted by his love of prayer, and to cure himself of inattention he begged the master to punish him before all the boys whenever he neglected his studies.

The course of his life was marked by many trials. A still greater indignity was in store for him. Being unjustly accused by some evil-minded persons, he was arrested and led along the streets like a common criminal, followed by a jeering mob. On the way to prison, Ignatius and his persecutors encountered a boy of seventeen mounted on a spirited horse, followed by retainers. The boy reigned up his horse and gazed eagerly at the sad and dignified figure of the Saint. This very boy, many years later, knelt at the Saint's feet and begged to be admitted to his Society. As Duke of Gandia Francis Borgia astonished the world by becoming a Jesuit, General of the Society, and a Saint of the Church.

The virtue of humility St. Ignatius embraced with the utmost ardor when he first entered upon a spiritual course of life. For a long time he went about in rags and lived in hospitals, —despised, affronted, and persecuted. He cheerfully performed the meanest offices about the house, as making beds, cleansing the rooms of the sick, etc. He received rebukes from any one with thanks. Though he was the superior, he frequently submitted to rebukes from inferiors with wonderful meekness and humility.

Before the end of his life St. Ignatius had the joy of seeing his army (the Society of Jesus) in action everywhere. He died in Rome, in 1556.

His feast is celebrated on July the thirty-first.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"And as He entered a certain town there met Him ten men that were lepers." (*St. Luke* xvii, 12.)

St. Augustine says that the leper is an image of heretics and sinners, and especially of those afflicted with the vice of impurity. As a leper is a disgusting object to man, so is a lewd man abominable in the sight of God. As lepers were avoided because of the danger of contagion, so must lewd persons be avoided, because they easily communicate their spiritual disease to others.

The law of Moses prescribed that lepers, when cured of their disease, should present themselves to the priests to be declared cured, after which they were restored to the society of their fellowmen and permitted to enter the Temple. On this account Jesus sent those lepers to the priests, so that they might testify to their cure and do what the law commanded in such cases.

According to the Old Law it was necessary for lepers to have recourse to the priest to be cleansed from legal impurity and restored to society. In like manner those who are infected by the vice of impurity have need of the ministry of the confessor, to be enabled to participate in the Sacra-

ments, to overcome their bad habits, and to persevere in their good resolutions. For such, frequent confession is undoubtedly the most powerful means of reform.

The cure of the lepers did not depend on the work of the priests, but on the grace of Jesus Christ, and as they believed in Him and hastened to see the priests as He had commanded them to do, they found the wish of their hearts granted; they were cured as a reward of their faith and obedience.

Our deliverance from the leprosy of sin does not depend on the words of the priest, who judges by exterior signs, but is effected by the power of Christ, who sees the interior of the soul. Hence the absolution of the priest is of no advantage to us if he was too easy in giving it, or if we obtained it by fraud. The absolution is of avail only if God, who searches the heart, confirms it. It also means that the operation of grace in our souls and the abundance of divine mercy will be in proportion to our faith and to our prompt obedience to the voice of God.

From the Samaritan who returned to thank Jesus we are to learn that we should be genuinely grateful to the divine mercy, by which, through the merits of Jesus Christ, we have been cleansed, not only once, but often, from the leprosy of sin. Let us not content ourselves with mere words, but as this Samaritan glorified God with a loud

voice and, prostrate at the feet of the Divine Master, adored Him, so should we by our actions and good example proclaim the power of His grace and make known to all men our faith and our submission to the majesty of the Lord.

From the nine ungrateful ones we should learn how disgraceful and infamous our conduct would be if we were ungrateful for the benefits which we receive either from God or from man.

On the fourth day of August the Church celebrates the feast of a Saint who bears the title of "God's Defender," because he triumphantly upheld the honor of God and the rights of His Church. St. Dominic, the Founder of the Order of the Friars Preachers, by prayer and a holy life succeeded in putting down the enemies of God. The greatest virtue of this Saint was a remarkable spirit of prayer and the constant recollection of his soul in God. "God has never," he said, "refused me what I have asked;" and he has left us the Rosary, that we may learn, with Mary's help, to pray easily and simply with the same holy confidence.

At the age of seven Dominic commenced his education under the direction of his uncle, who was a priest. His time was divided between

study and the care of the sanctuary, serving Mass, garlanding the altars, and adoring the beauty of the Blessed Sacrament. The tender child's soul gradually became saturated with God's love and passed seven happy years in these holy occupations.

At the University he became a master of wisdom. The purity and beauty of his life were a lodestar to his fellow students. He showed his goodness of heart when a terrible famine raged throughout Spain. Dominic gave away everything he had to relieve the suffering. When his money was gone, he sold his clothes and furniture, his books and manuscripts. Once he happened to meet a poor woman, whose son had been taken captive by the Moors. Without hesitation he offered himself as a substitute. His offer was refused, but the bereaved woman was consoled by the sympathy of the young student.

Instructed by the oracle of the Holy Ghost that the spirit of the Lord rests only on chaste souls, he watched with the utmost attention over his heart and kept its avenues, which are the senses, in constant subjection, by acts of mortification and self-denial. Always walking in the presence of God he made his conversation even with pious persons very short. Boards or the floor were the only bed on which he rested. From his mother he had learned a tender devotion to the Mother of God and a great love for the poor.

He sought to win wayward souls by prayer and acts of charity. His favorite weapon was the Holy Rosary, which became the strong sword and shield of his illustrious Order and of the whole Church of Christ.

St. Dominic made use of no other arms than meekness and patience to repulse injuries. He never complained of insults or injuries. His constant endeavor was to do all the good in his power to those who hated and persecuted him. A certain heretic, who was unknown to the Saint, offered himself one day to be his guide; he led him over rough paths, covered with stones and briers, so that Dominic's feet became wounded, for he always walked barefoot. The meekness with which he received this insult so moved the heretic that he became a Catholic.

Wherever the Saint travelled, he preached frequently, even along the road. The greater part of the night he loved to spend in churches, at the foot of the altar. Though he was the superior of his Order, he was distinguished in nothing from the lowest among his brethren. Great humility and strict abstinence were his only marks of distinction. Humility gave his prayer force and efficacy.

He died at the convent of St. Nicholas at Bologna, on the sixth of August, 1221, and was canonized thirteen years later.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Jesus said to His disciples: "No man can serve two masters." (*St. Matthew* vi, 24.)

In to-day's Gospel Christ wants to show us how foolish people are when they give way to extreme anxiety and become attached to the riches of this world. He exhorts us to place our trust in Providence.

Christ said that the love for riches is bad because they are apt to rule our heart; and when this is the case, it will be impossible for us to please God. We cannot at the same time please two masters who are so opposed to each other in all things as are the love of riches and the love of God.

The love of God is always and only occupied with the things of Heaven; it despises the things of the world, and voluntarily distributes them to the poor. The love of riches, on the contrary, is eager to obtain the things of the world, is never satisfied with its profits, and instead of helping the poor and needy, it rather endeavors to rob them.

In order to encourage us to place our confidence in God, Jesus commands us not to be solicitous

about what we are to eat, or wherewith we are to clothe ourselves, because God who has made us out of nothing, cannot and will not refuse us what is necessary for our sustenance if we have recourse to His fatherly love with childlike confidence.

This is proved by what happens every day. The birds of the air are fed, and the flowers of the field are clad in beautiful garments. Now if God in His providence preserves that order of things by which the birds receive their food and the flowers their beautiful vesture, how much more will He provide the necessaries of life for us, since He is our Father.

Bear in mind that while Christ forbids us to be over-anxious or uneasy, He does not dispense us from using our strength. One who leads an idle and careless life is unworthy of God's bounty, and insults His Providence. We must earn our bread in the sweat of our brow, but our efforts will be fruitless if they have not the blessing of God. When we cannot do anything for ourselves, the powerful hand of God will help us, if, like good children, we have recourse to His paternal love.

We find many examples of this in Holy Scripture. Agar was provided with water for her dying son, Ismael; Susanna was given a protector who defended her innocence and delivered her from death; Daniel was provided with food in

the lion's den and was saved from death; to the Hebrew people in the desert God sent quails and gave manna every day for forty years. When they had no water to drink, He miraculously turned bitter water into sweet and gave them water out of a rock. Now this Divine Providence that cared for the Israelites under the Old Covenant will also take care of us. We often enjoy its benefits without realizing it; but the Holy Ghost assures us that the just man has never been forsaken and God always watches over us as a loving Father.

Jesus Christ wishes to teach us that our only desire and our constant prayer should be that God may be glorified and that we obtain the necessary means to obtain Heaven,—that is, an abundance of grace, holiness of life, and perseverance in goodness. When, therefore, the kingdom of God is our only object, persevering in divine service, then divine Providence will provide us with the necessary temporal goods, without our being anxious about them, in the same manner as the earth brought forth its fruit without being cultivated when Adam was in the state of original innocence.

In this life we are crossing, as it were, a stormy sea in an overladen ship. If we do not throw

the useless cargo overboard, we shall perish. The more we lighten ourselves of earthly goods, the more securely shall we reach our eternal haven. The Saints trampled on the world. If men to-day do not go barefoot, or undergo sharp penances, as the Saints did, there are many ways in which they can trample on the world; and our Lord teaches them where to find the necessary courage.

St. Clare, whose feast is celebrated on the twelfth of August, renounced all the luxuries which riches can bring and led a life of severe mortification,—a great reproach to the slothful and sensual generation of our day.

In her infancy she was extremely devout and remarkable for her goodness. Although very beautiful and very talented, Clare did not care for any of these gifts. She spent long hours in prayer. It was her custom to count her Paters and Aves by a certain number of little stones in her lap, in imitation of some ancient hermits. She loved penance. Under the rich clothes which her rank obliged her to wear, she wore a hair-shirt and other coarse things that wounded her sensitive body.

Her acquaintance with St. Francis of Assisi began when she was quite a girl. Having heard him preach on the contempt of the world, the shortness of life, and the love of God, she visited him in his solitude and confided to him the secret yearnings of her soul, that she wished to leave

the world and to embrace a life of poverty and penance.

This was a strange request. Clare was very young and had been brought up in a luxurious home. St. Francis told her that if she wished to be his disciple, she must learn to love poverty above all things and follow in the footsteps of the crucified Redeemer.

Returning to her home, she laid aside her silken garments, took off her beautiful jewels, and donned a gown of sack cloth. Thus disfigured, the beautiful girl went out into the streets of her native town, begging for alms in the same way as Francis was accustomed to do. St. Francis received her religious vows without delay. Kneeling before the altar, she permitted him to cut off her hair and was clothed in a rough brown habit.

In a miserable house near Assisi she founded her Order. First she was joined by her sister, then fourteen years of age, and afterwards by her mother and other noble ladies. The rule she drew up for her nuns was very strict. They never ate meat, wore no shoes, and hardly ever spoke. They practiced many austerities and embroidered beautiful vestments and spun linen for use in the sanctuary.

One night a body of infidels assaulted the convent. St. Clare in her poverty had no servants to defend her and no treasure wherewith to buy

off the foe. Her one resource was the Blessed Sacrament. She opened the door of the tabernacle and took from it the golden monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament. Followed by her nuns, she advanced to the outer walls. And then a wonderful thing happened. Kneeling before the Sacred Host, St. Clare prayed: "Deliver not to beasts, O Lord, the souls of those who confide in Thee." A voice from the Host replied: "My protection will never fail you." A light as from the sun streamed from the golden case. The ruffians cowered down, drew back, grew pale, and trembled for fear. A sudden panic seized them, they took to flight, and the convent was spared. Thus was St. Clare's poverty more powerful than the strength of men.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Jesus went into a city that is called Naim. . . . And when He came nigh the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out . . ." (*St. Luke* vii, 11, 12.)

CHRIST's presence in Naim would seem to have been an accident, but the sacred interpreters say that He went there purposely and arranged his visit so that He was at the gate of the city at the proper moment to work the astonishing miracle, which inspired those who beheld it with faith.

There is a great lesson for us in this miracle. The dead man is the image of a sinner dead in the eyes of God, more disfigured by his sins than a corpse, deprived of every spiritual good and of the strength to merit eternal life.

The sorrowful mother is the Church, who never loses sight of those of her children whom sin has deprived of life. She continually laments their condition, desires their conversion, and prays for it fervently and constantly to God, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

We see the same Jesus who stood next to the bier of the dead man at Naim now reigning in Heaven, where by the constant and fervent prayers of our common mother the Church, He

is moved to compassion for the poor sinners and gives them the grace to repent.

By the command to rise our Divine Master wished to teach us that for the conversion of a sinner, who is a slave of his evil passions, and bad habits, a special grace is necessary. Oh, how should habitual sinners tremble when they reflect that God gives this grace only out of pure mercy, and that He does not give it to all, but only to those whom He pleases, for no one can merit this grace.

When God commands a sinner to rise from his spiritual death, he is aroused from his deathly stupor, opens his eyes to the light of faith, confesses his sins, and those very passions that formerly controlled him he now subjects to the power of his will. Recall to mind St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Margaret, how at the command of grace they shook off the sleep of death and made use of those talents which had once been the sad cause of their transgressions.

When God by His grace converts a sinner, He restores Him to the Church, his mother, who gains in Him a son and rejoices at his return to spiritual life. Besides God confides His son, risen to a new life, to her maternal care, that she may help him to gain strength, that she may enlighten, console, encourage, and guide him on the way to penance, perseverance, and perfection.

It is rather surprising that so few Christians

take notice of the greater miracle that God continually works in a spiritual manner in the Church. Every day His powerful grace recalls many souls from death to life, yet scarcely any one thinks of thanking Him and giving the glory which is His due.

Let us beg Jesus to come to meet us in His great charity, as He did the dead man of Naim, when we have had the misfortune to fall into mortal sin. Let us thank God for all He has done for us, either by restoring us to grace or by preserving us from sin which might again cause our spiritual death.

A great many of the Saints made for themselves a sort of rule or motto, which they strictly followed throughout life. St. John Berchmans' motto was: "Make a great deal of the very least things;" and this, like another motto of his, "Speak little, do much," shows how in so uneventful and short a life he became so great a Saint. Nothing was small in his eyes that had to do with God. The Imitation says: "Labor now a little, and thou shalt find great rest; yea, everlasting joy. If thou continue faithful and fervent in working, God will doubtless be faithful and liberal in rewarding."

When still very young, John made up his mind to be a Saint. His feast is kept on August the thirteenth, because he died on that day, just to be in Heaven for Our Lady's Assumption, for he loved Our Lady, and she loved him.

John had a beautiful face and his eyes were lit up with joy, so that he was called "Brother Laetus," which means "Brother Joyful." As a little fellow he used to play ball and when he entered the Jesuit novitiate, he played games whenever he was asked to do so, and when he played, he gave his whole mind to the game. If he lost he was never upset, but he was pleased when he won.

His father was a shoemaker. He was not rich and often thought he would have to take his eldest boy away from his studies to put him to some trade that would bring in money. And because young Berchmans was so good a son, so promising a scholar, it cost his father much to give him up to God. But he was too good a Christian to refuse the sacrifice. Once when his father was ill, John was called into the sick-room and asked to abandon his studies. He threw himself on his knees, stretched out his hands, and implored his parents to let him study a few years longer. "Do not be alarmed about the expense, I shall be content to live on bread and water." His poor parents could not refuse him. They yielded, and God enabled him to continue his studies.

His tutor gave him charge of two little boys. John was like a guardian angel to these little fellows. He taught them their lessons and as a reward John was able to stay at college and learn all that was necessary to prepare for the priesthood.

At the age of eighteen he entered the Society of Jesus. As a scholastic, he was given the very same lamps to trim that St. Aloysius had cleaned about forty years before. He took upon himself all the disagreeable things he could find. His life in the holy city of Rome was as perfect as that of a student within his college-walls. His modesty and purity attracted attention, as great virtue always does, and the young laymen who attended the lectures would come to gaze upon his holy face and go away the better for the sight.

As a faithful follower of St. Ignatius, his mortifications were of such a kind as you and I could imitate. He never leaned back in his chair; he knelt without support for his hands; he ate what was assigned to him as his portion; he never asked for extras; he was content with everything, and performed every duty as well as he could. "Common life is my mortification," he used to say. Great austerities are not recorded of him, but fidelity in little things made him a Saint.

He was only twenty-two when his summons came to meet God. Yet he had found time with the grace of God to make himself a Saint. He

said a most loving good-bye to all his brothers in Christ. When he was no longer able to hold his Rule Book and his rosary and crucifix, he propped them up against his knees, and died looking at his treasures.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"When Jesus went into the house of one of the chiefs of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath-day to eat bread, they watched Him." (*St. Luke* xiv, 1.)

THE Pharisees were bad men, yet Jesus did not refuse to enter the house of one of the most distinguished among them. He wished to take this opportunity to benefit them by His doctrines and miracles; thus teaching us not to repel or avoid sinners as long as there is any hope of doing them good.

The Gospel relates that on this occasion He healed a man who had the dropsy, thereby teaching those who are present, as well as us, that it is not forbidden to heal the sick on the Sabbath and that we should avoid pride and cultivate humility.

St. Augustine points to the man afflicted with the dropsy as a figure of the rich miser who, the more he has, the more he wants, after the manner of dropsical patients who, the fuller they are of water, the more they want to drink. He goes on to say that the dropsical man is a type of any other sinner under the influence of a predominating passion. Any evil passion, when it takes possession of the heart, becomes insatiable, and the

oftener it is gratified, the worse it becomes, like the thirst of one afflicted with the dropsy. If we notice a drunkard, a proud man, a libertine, a miser, we see that the greatest gains do not satisfy their desires, and, no matter how often they gratify their whims, they never can get enough.

Jesus wished to convince the Pharisees that it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day. He proved it from their own conduct, because they did not scruple to draw from the pit an ass or an ox that had fallen into it. If they did this because their interest required it, they should make no difficulty when it came to curing a sick person for charity's sake and for the glory of God. Those Pharisees were impious men, says the Venerable Bede. Through avarice they violated the law of the Sabbath, but at the same time they accused Christ of violating the Sabbath because He cured a man for charity's sake. The Pharisees, instead of being enlightened by His reasoning, became more obstinate in finding fault with Christ, and, as St. John relates, they persecuted Him, telling the people that He was not a friend of God because He did not observe the Sabbath.

The Pharisees who had been invited to dinner were full of self-conceit. Each one had a high opinion of himself, and each sought to have the first seat at the table. Jesus, on reading their

hearts, advised them rather to select the lowest place. He wished to correct those proud men, by making them understand how improper their behavior was in selecting the best places; at the same time He wished to teach all future Christians to close their eyes to their own merits, not to exact attention, nor to believe themselves inferior to others, but always with sincerity of heart content themselves with the last place. He finished this lesson by saying that "he who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

Even the world despises the proud, and when it can humble them, it does so with pleasure. On the other hand, it loves, esteems, and praises the truly humble, and is pleased when their merits are appreciated. God, says St. Hilary, will humble the pride of the ambitious and glorify the humble, if not in this life, certainly and forever in the next.

Humility consists in considering ourselves as nothing before God; for in truth we are nothing, and all we have, in the order of nature or in that of grace, comes from God, and we are dependent wholly on His goodness.

If you had some dear friend living close by, you would often go to see him, and the dearer he

was to you, the oftener you would visit him. Our dear Lord is always in the Blessed Sacrament, expecting you. Try, then, to visit Him often, if possible, every day. It is for us men and not for the angels, that our Blessed Lord resides upon the altar. Yet angels throng our churches to worship Him while men absent themselves. Learn from the Saints to avoid such ingratitude, and to spend every possible moment, as they did, before the Most Holy Sacrament.

During the time of the persecutions in the great city of Rome, it was the privilege of the Christians to carry the Blessed Sacrament from the Catacombs to their homes, and to hide It with all reverence in a secret place. When seized and dragged to death, the martyr could give the Holy Viaticum to himself, and thus gain strength for the ordeal awaiting him.

Among the many heroic souls who shed their blood in Rome was one Tarcisius, a boy of thirteen, who served as acolyte in one of the chapels of the Catacombs. He was well known to the Christians, and noted for his fervor and the love he bore for his crucified Lord.

Carrying the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of Rome was a very dangerous undertaking. It had been rumored among the pagans that the Christians, when coming up from the Catacombs, frequently carried a treasure concealed in their bosoms, and they would be on the

watch for any person who appeared to be in possession of it.

One day there were some prisoners who famished for this Heavenly Food, but no one could be found to take It to them. At last a boy called Tarcisius was entrusted with the treasure. He folded the sacred Species in his robe and carried It through the crowded streets. An idle mob lay in his way, bent on wicked fun. They saw the boy, and called out to him to show what he carried so warily. The child hurried forward; but they were not to be balked. They pursued him down the narrow lane, and when they saw he was determined not to surrender, they took up stones and flung them at him. Others struck him with their thick, knobbed sticks.

The boy reeled and dropped, still clinging to his sacred treasure. There was a cry; the mob fell upon him, and sought among his garments for his treasure. They found nothing! With a parting kick of disgust they left the mangled body.

In order to prevent the Blessed Sacrament from falling into their sacrilegious hands, God had worked a miracle. The Sacred Bread which the priest had placed in Tarcisius' bosom half an hour before had disappeared. The men discovered only the linen cloth in which It had been wrapped.

At night-fall the Christians carried the body of Tarcisius to the Catacombs and laid it before

the altar previous to its burial in the cemetery of St. Callistus on the morrow.

Tarcisius was buried on August the fifteenth, and a great Pope had inscribed upon his grave the words: "Tarcisius, carrying the Sacrament of Christ, chose rather to suffer death than to betray the Heavenly Body." The story of Tarcisius' love and respect for the Holy Sacrament, and the fact that he defended It with his life, show very clearly that the doctrine of the Real Presence was taught in those early days just as it is now.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"And one of them, a doctor of the law, asked Him, tempting Him: Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (St. Matthew xxii, 35, 36.)

To understand the force and the malice of this question, which the Gospel calls a temptation, it is necessary to know that in Christ's time the Pharisees discussed the question, which was the greater obligation: to love God or to offer the sacrifices commanded by the Law in the Temple. Many were of the opinion that the first and greatest commandment was that of offering sacrifice in the Temple. On this account the doctor of the Law asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment. He intended to induce Him to decide the question and thus displeasing the one or the other party.

Christ answered that the first and greatest commandment was to love God above all things, with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with all our strength.

That this precept there is nothing more reasonable or more just. God is perfection itself, the fountain and source of all goodness; therefore,

He must be loved for what He is, in preference to all other things, and He must be loved with our whole heart and soul, cost what it may. God has created us for the sole purpose that we should love Him, and hereafter enjoy Him for all eternity as a reward for this love. Therefore we are bound by the law of nature to love Him. We are furthermore bound in justice to love Him, because He is the absolute Lord of our life and all we have on earth. God has bestowed on us innumerable natural and supernatural benefits, and continues to do so; therefore, we are bound to love Him out of sheer gratitude.

The second great commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves; that is, we must love him sincerely, ardently, and effectively, but always for the sake of God.

The Divine Master taught us the way to practice this love when He said: "Do unto others as you wish them to do unto you." St. Augustine, explaining this maxim, says: "Whatever good we wish for ourselves, the same we must procure for our neighbor, and the evil that we fear, we must prevent from befalling our neighbor. God has commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves, but always for the love of Him, in regard to Him, with eyes fixed on Him alone. Therefore, he who loves and gives much to his neighbor through human feeling, through natural goodness of heart, would not satisfy the precept. He

would deserve the praise and gratitude of men, but he would merit no supernatural reward. He whose heart is animated by charity observes the whole law; but when this virtue, which constitutes the essence of the Christian life, is wanting, the whole law is transgressed.

Christ took this occasion to enlighten His enemies by asking them what they thought of Him whom all the Jews expected.

The Pharisees said that the expected Messias was to be the son of David. This was correct, but it was not the whole truth. The Messias was true God and true man, and hence they should have said: As God, He was the son of the Eternal Father, and as man, He was a descendant of David. But the Pharisees either did not know or did not want to believe in the divinity of Christ.

Jesus showed them that David, inspired by the Holy Ghost, had called Him Lord, thus giving Him a title which He would not have given Him if he had not known Him to be greater than himself, because He was the Son of God, who was to make His enemies His footstool.

Our greatest duty is to love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. We are to learn, further, not to question God on the maxims of religion. Lastly, we are to learn how great our confusion will be if, like the Pharisees, we dare to oppose anything that redounds to the glory of Jesus Christ.

To have a good, pious, and prudent mother is a great blessing. St. Louis, King of France, had the good fortune to have such a mother. "Guard against sin!" was the constant warning of Queen Blanche to the child who was to be the future King of France. Often, she would say to him: "You know, my dear son, that I love you with the greatest tenderness that a mother can have; yet I would rather see you dead than guilty of a mortal sin."

Such teachings made a deep impression on the prince, and he himself said, later in life, that he never forgot the instructions of his mother, but thought of them every day. Oh, that all children would take their mother's teachings so earnestly to heart!

When he was twelve years old, Louis lost his father and himself ascended the throne under the regency of his mother. Mother and son were a beautiful example of mutual love. Blanche was a wise queen and Louis a dutiful son. And such he remained even after he became king, which was when he reached his twentieth year.

He was a most faithful son of the Catholic Church. In a short time he won the love of his

people and was praised for his justice, power, and kindness. He had no love for display or costly feasts. Simplicity was the rule of his life. In the brilliant court of France he led as simple a life as if he had been a member of a religious Order. On two days in the week he abstained from meat, and at certain times he wore a hair-shirt. Amidst the cares of government he daily recited the Divine Office, heard two Masses, and read devotional books. He visited the hospitals and often nursed the sick, even lepers, with his own hands.

His biographer says that the king once ordered a wealthy man, who was a blasphemer, to be branded on the mouth, in order to teach him to use his lips aright. Some blamed the king for ordering so terrible a punishment. Louis was surprised. "Why," he said, "I would willingly be branded to prevent such an outrage." Another man he fined so heavily that he lost almost all he possessed, because he had hanged three children for hunting rabbits on his estate. The money was employed to found Masses for the children's souls.

A fellow monarch once made Louis a great present. He brought him the crown of thorns from the Holy Land. Louis loved Our Lord with all his heart, and he was beside himself with joy at this precious relic. He sent two Dominican friars to bring it to France. He and his brother

Robert, walking barefoot, carried it into Paris, in a pompous and devout procession, all the streets being magnificently adorned. To this very day we know how the great King honored the Sacred Crown. He built for it the most beautiful chapel that exists, called La Sainte Chapelle, which you can see when you go to Paris, for it still remains to show the people how their greatest king reverenced the Passion of Our Lord.

In the twentieth year of his reign Louis became dangerously ill. Then he vowed to God that he would go upon a crusade to free the Holy Land from the yoke of the infidels if He permitted him to recover his health. God heard his prayer and the saintly King got well.

During his second crusade a plague broke out in the King's camp. This time he himself fell a victim. Feeling that he was about to die, he asked to be laid on ashes, and here, after receiving the last Sacraments, he passed away. This was on August the twenty-fifth, which day the Church has set aside for his feast.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into His own city." (*St. Matthew* ix, 1.)

One day Jesus came into His own city of Capharnaum, on the west bank of the river Jordan, a little before it flows into the Sea of Tiberias, also called Lake of Genesareth or Sea of Galilee. This was an important commercial center, the market of all Judea, on account of its large population, its extensive trade, and the concourse of strangers.

The home of Jesus was Nazareth, but St. John Chrysostom and many others are of the opinion that He cherished a special affection for Capharnaum, because that St. Matthew calls it *His* city. In Capharnaum there was a house where Christ was accustomed to meet His Apostles, and it was there that He began to preach, to correct the prevailing vices, to teach virtue, and to work miracles.

He healed the paralytic mentioned in the Gospel, He restored sight to two blind persons, and healed the deaf and dumb man who was possessed by the devil. He also cured the servant of the

centurion, the woman who was suffering from a loss of blood, and the son of Regulus, who was dying of fever. Besides, he recalled to life the daughter of Jairus.

The paralytic was a figure of the human race, which was sick on account of the sin of its First Parents. The paralytic was incurable by natural means. In like manner the human race was reduced to a most deplorable condition; it could not withstand the power of the passions; it could not take a step or do anything by which to gain Heaven and no one could help but Jesus alone.

He first cured the paralytic's soul. The health of his body would have been of little value to him if he had not received with it the health of his soul; therefore, Jesus first gave him the most necessary grace—that is, the health of his soul, and then that which was of less importance, health of body.

Hereby He wished to teach us that, when we are sick, our first thought should be to place ourselves in the grace of God, thus healing our soul first, because diseases are very often a punishment for sins committed.

The Jews took offence at the words of Jesus: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Ignorant people call all things they do not understand blunders and folly; so also do unbelievers, and the wicked call blasphemy every truth of faith which they

do not like. Those scribes did not want to know that Jesus was God, and when He said that the sins of the paralytic were forgiven him, His words seemed to them horrible blasphemy. How many Christians accuse the ministers of the altar of rigorism and ignorance when they announce truths that are not according to their corrupt tastes.

Jesus read their secret thoughts and gave them a convincing proof that He was true God. Sinners may learn from this that no matter how much they strive to hide themselves before men, He always knows them, for He searches the innermost recesses of the heart.

Furthermore, Christ showed that, on account of His divinity and the merits of His Passion, He had power to forgive sins and to assist sinners by His grace to triumph over their evil passions. The paralytic arose cured, took up his bed, and went home.

The helpless condition of the paralytic teaches us to fear the misery to which our sinful passions can reduce us. The kindness with which the Redeemer treated the sick man, invites us to have great confidence in God and to trust in His mercy. The greatness of the miracle causes us to admire the power conferred by Jesus on His priests, in order that they may use it in a spiritual manner in the Sacrament of Penance.

Among the seven deadly sins, pride is the first and the most abhorred by God. Holy Scripture tells us that God resists the proud. On account of pride Lucifer was cast out of Heaven. Pride drove our first parents from Paradise and plunged the whole human race into misery of sin. It was pride that kept the Pharisees from being justified. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The life of St. Rose of Lima teaches us a lesson of humility. Rose had no pride. She did not think that she was better or more virtuous than others. She was not vain of her physical beauty. When her parents had become poor, she did not hesitate to serve as a maid for their sake. And because she was not proud, she was active in visiting the poor and nursing the sick.

Even in childhood Rose practiced abnegation and self-denial. She repressed her tears when her thumb had to be cut off on account of an injury. She always thought of our suffering Saviour, who submitted to far greater pains for our sake. She fasted three times each week, taking nothing but water and bread, and allowed herself little more than vegetables on the other

days. She took but little sleep, and that on a hard bed.

Rose was very beautiful in form and features. But she looked upon beauty as a dangerous gift, which easily leads to vanity, and avoided everything that might attract notice. She even marred her delicate skin by rubbing it with Cayenne pepper. Her beautiful hair she cut off. To help her parents, she planted the garden with flowers, made bouquets, and sent a servant out to sell them on the market-place.

When she took service as a maid, she worked busily at her tasks, day and night, without, however, interrupting her communion with God. The other servants had no understanding for this holy life, but treated Rose unkindly. But she bore it all patiently, for she remembered the persecutions to which Our Dear Lord was subjected.

Rose had early vowed her heart to her Heavenly Bridegroom and refused a marriage which would have brought her wealth and comfort. The praise of her beauty did not touch her, any more than the reproaches for her behavior moved her.

Wishing to lead a life of purity as a spouse of Jesus she joined the third Order of St. Dominic. In a corner of her garden she built a cell and decorated it with a crucifix and pictures of the Saints. Here she spent most of her time in prayer and pious meditation. She took particular delight in decorating churches and altars.

She often visited the poor and sick of the city but disliked to make worldly calls merely for social pleasure. Severe works of penance were her delight. On her head she wore a wreath of flowers, with thorns turned inward, to resemble the Saviour crowned with thorns. When she spoke of God, she was like one inspired.

After a long and painful illness St. Rose entered into the glory of her Heavenly Bridegroom, on August the thirtieth the day set aside for her feast. She was thirty-one years old when she died.

St. Rose, pure as driven snow, was filled with deepest contrition and humility, and did constant and terrible penance. Our sins are continual, our repentance is passing, our contrition slight, our penance nothing. How will it fare with us?

St. Rose said: "Would you win Heaven? If so, you must be generous, toil hard, and suffer much, for the reward which God has prepared is exceeding great."

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage. (*St. Matthew* xxii, 2, 3.)

THE object of this parable was to warn the Jews of the danger of their obstinacy in refusing to recognize in Christ the Messias who came to call them in the name of His Eternal Father to partake of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Church, in which God exercises His power over the minds and hearts of men. The royal Father, who prepares the nuptial feast, is the same God who invites all mankind to enter the Church, and the Bridegroom is Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who is united to the Church.

The nuptial feast is eternal life, communicated to men through the Holy Church, which was ordained and prepared by God from all eternity.

The invited guests are all the children of Adam, of the Old as well as of the New Testament. Those who refused the first invitation were (1) the Gentiles, who did not believe in Christ, (2) the Jews, who would not listen to the Prophets, and

(3) all those who did not and do not accept the truths of the Gospel.

The servants sent out by the king were the Prophets, who invited men to believe and hope in the Messias, and announced His coming. Those who renewed the invitation were the Apostles and all their legitimate successors in preaching the Gospel.

The animals killed for the feast are the food signifying the abundance of food which God has prepared for souls in His Church. If we consider the doctrines of Jesus Christ, His miracles, His example, His death, His merits, and His Sacraments, we may understand how abundantly God has provided for our souls. The preaching of the Apostles, the constancy of the martyrs, the prodigies which signalized the promulgation of the faith, and the constant assistance of the Holy Ghost, were so many channels to prepare food for the nuptials of the Church with her heavenly Spouse.

Those who maltreated the servants are (1), the Jews, who stoned the Prophets and crucified Christ; (2) the persecutors of the Church, who condemned those who proclaimed the Gospel to all kinds of torments, and, finally, all those who persecute priests because they are ministers of God.

The man without the wedding garment is the sad figure of those who are in the Church by virtue of Baptism, but are not in state of sanctifying

grace, because they are guilty of unrepented mortal sins. The king calls him friend. From this we learn that God hates sin, but not the sinner; for although man becomes His enemy by sin, he still remains His creature; and therefore, He is inclined to treat him in a friendly manner whenever he will ask pardon for his sins. By the punishment inflicted God warns us that the sinner who is mute and does not confess his guilt and ask for forgiveness, will be cast out of the kingdom into eternal pain.

From this Gospel we are to learn principally three things: (1) not to despise divine grace; (2) to be sure that we have the nuptial garment, which is sanctifying grace; and (3) that to be saved it is not enough to be in the Church and to bear the name of Christian, as it was not sufficient for that intruder to be seated at the nuptial banquet, from which he was disgracefully banished.

A Saint has wisely remarked that earthly goods are of such a nature that he who possesses fewest of them is the best off. Christ Himself was poor from His birth to His death on the Cross. Often He had not where to rest His head. He said of Himself to the man who came to follow Him: "Foxes have holes and the birds of the

air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

He who has riches, takes care of them first; but he who has nothing, can look after his soul. The heavier his pack, the harder it is for the traveller to proceed. So earthly possessions are a drag on the way to heaven.

The life of St. Francis of Assisi is the condemnation of the wiseacres of this world, who, like the Jews and the Gentiles, look on the humility of the Cross as a scandal and a folly. Never did any Saint evince greater detachment from the things of the earth or walk more closely in the footsteps of the Redeemer, than this illustrious servant of God, whose feast the Church celebrates on October the fourth.

Francis in his youth brushed aside the amusements of the world and its perishable goods, and bound himself by a vow to bestow alms on everyone who would ask them of him in the name and for the love of God.

One day, while taking a walk, he met a gentleman who had been reduced to extreme want. At that moment Francis wore a costly dress. Moved to tears by the sight of the beggar, he stripped himself of his rich apparel and exchanged it for the rags that covered the unfortunate man. On another occasion, he met a man covered with horrid sores due to leprosy. His first sensation was one of disgust and alarm; but he soon recollected

himself, and, overcoming the weakness of nature by his charity, embraced the leper and bestowed rich alms on him.

Having made up his mind to strive for perfection, he commenced visiting the sick in the hospitals, ministering to them, consoling them, and dressing their sores. He then made a pilgrimage to Rome and visited the tombs of the Apostles, where his heart was inflamed with a new love for the Cross of Christ.

Amongst the multitude of the poor who begged at the gate of St. Peter's Church, was one whose rags proved him to be poorer than all his fellows. Francis longed for the clothes of this wretched mendicant, and gave him his own clothes for them.

It was thus that he commenced to profess the faith of the Cross and to follow that little Infant of Bethlehem (thus was he accustomed to call Our Lord), "who become poor for the love of us, in order to enrich us by His poverty."

St. Francis became the founder of one of the great Orders of the Church, that of the Friars Minor, who for Christ's sake went out among the people, serving high and low, rich and poor, wherever their services were needed.

They were to have no interests of their own, and while they bestowed prayers and tears, and care, and sympathy on every side, they went barefooted and poorly clad, and depended on alms for their daily bread.

When Francis found his last hour approaching, he desired the brethren to stretch him on the floor, where his body was covered with a poor habit which some one had bestowed on him for charity. In this state he exhorted his disciples to love God and to practice poverty and penance.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"There was a cerain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum." (*St. John* iv, 46.)

Jesus worked the miracle reported in to-day's Gospel in the city of Cana in Galilee, where He had converted water into wine. The ruler was from Capharnaum, which is situated at the northwestern side of the Lake of Genesareth, many miles from Cana. Capharnaum was a city beloved by the Divine Teacher, and one which He had made famous by many miracles.

Christ had a special purpose in rebuking the ruler for the imperfection of his faith, for if he really believed that Christ was true God, he should have known that a simple act of His will was sufficient to cure his dying son, and that it was not necessary for the patient to be present in person. This reproof was also meant for all those whose faith is as imperfect as his was.

The ruler did not understand the reason of this rebuke; his eyes remained closed to the imperfection of his faith. He renewed his prayer and requested the Divine Master to come down to his house before his son died. How many Christians, even in our day, by applying to others the re-

proofs which they should apply to themselves, continue in their defects without correcting themselves as they should.

Our Lord was not ruffled at the conduct of the ruler, but in His mercy chose rather to cure his mind by hearing his prayer and by working the miracle without moving from the place where He was. Let us admire the goodness and the patience of Jesus who had compassion on human infirmity and bestowed His favors even on those who were imperfect.

By curing the son who was dying at a distance Jesus proved that He was God, who sees and controls absent things as if they were present.

The ruler believed the Divine Teacher, and, as a consequence, his faith increased; still, as we can gather from the Gospel, his faith was as yet not perfect.

When the ruler heard from his servants that the fever had suddenly left his son the day at the very moment when Christ had assured Him that the boy would live, he was convinced that Christ was truly the Son of God; that He was almighty, and the Lord of life and death; he believed Him to be the expected Messias, and he and his whole family sincerely embraced the faith.

Some interpreters recognize in the ruler who left his home to seek Christ, the human mind, sitting as a queen in the midst of all created things, naturally rising above all material things, and,

leaving far behind what is subject to the senses and going in search of the truth that comes from Heaven. In the ruler's sick son they recognize the human will, weak and wavering in the midst of the seduction of the world; and in the fever they discern the power of the evil passions, which corrupt the will and cause it to be almost lifeless in regard to doing good.

What are we to learn from this Gospel? We are to learn, first, how useful trial and afflictions are in leading us to God, for the ruler and his whole house would perhaps not have believed in Christ if the son had not been afflicted with the mortal sickness. Secondly, we are to admire the God's goodness in bearing with our imperfections when we pray to Him; and, lastly, like the ruler, we are to lead our neighbor, at least by our good example, to the knowledge of God and to the faithful observance of His holy law.

Whoever would go forward in the service of God, must begin his life anew as it were each day, must keep himself as much as possible in the presence of God, and in all his actions must have but one end in view, namely, the honor of God. Daily resolutions to fulfil, at all cost, every duty demanded by God, is the lesson taught by St.

Charles Borromeo, a lesson we must learn if we would overcome ourselves and reform our lives.

Charles loved modesty, simplicity, prayer, and everything else that reminded him of God. He was very diligent in his studies. His favorite amusement was to build little chapels, adorn altars, and sing the Divine Office. By his happy inclination to piety and his love of ecclesiastical functions, his parents judged him to be destined by God for the clerical state, in which he was very successful, for when only twenty-three years old, he was found worthy to become a Cardinal.

Charles shed tears over the unhappy state of things which he found existing during his time. God, to be sure, had not given him an omnipotent arm; but he burned with zeal to stem the torrent of depravity. The vastness of his projects never disconcerted him; he placed his trust in the aid of Heaven, being convinced that no man can fail to help his fellow-men if he draws energy from virtue. In the eyes of all, Charles was the special ambassador of the Most High.

Inflexible in maintaining discipline he was a most tender father to his flock. He would sit by the road-side to teach a poor man the *Pater* and *Ave,* and would enter hovels, the stench of which drove his attendants from the door.

From his great love of mortification sprang a profound humility, unalterable gentleness, and a perfect detachment from the things of earth. He

tarried and talked with the poor, like a father amongst his children, like a friend with friends. No matter how great his fatigue, he sought them out in order to instruct them. When the holy prelate was travelling, he either prayed or studied on the journey, desiring no other recreation than that afforded by the variety of his occupations.

Charles Barromeo cherished great devotion for St. Ambrose and for the Blessed Virgin Mary, under whose protection he had placed his colleges. He always carried about him a relic of the true Cross enshrined in a golden crucifix. In the midst of his work he found delight in pausing for some moments now and then to pray at the foot of the altar. He was never unoccupied, and time seemed so precious to him that even at his meals he always had a book before his eyes, and thus never ceased to labor.

A discontented member of his flock once determined to destroy the pious Cardinal. One evening, when the Saint was kneeling with his household at night-prayers, the murderer sneaked into the palace, and as the choir was singing, "Let not your heart be troubled," fired at the Saint. Charles fell forward on his face, and the household sprang to their feet; but the Saint, lifting himself up, bade them to kneel down, and with perfect composure completed the prayer. He had felt the ball, and deeming himself mortally wounded, had commended his soul to God. On

examination, it was found that the ball had not even pierced his rochet, but had left a black mark on the flesh, which was visible to his death. Thenceforth St. Charles' *rochet* became an Italian proverb to express anything that was impenetrable. The *rochet* is still preserved at Bordeaux, and the musket ball in the church of the Oblati in Milan.

When the plague broke out in Milan, the Cardinal visited the place where the victims were herded. He consoled them, provided for their spiritual and temporal wants, and declared that, during this awful calamity, nothing should separate him from his flock, for whom, if necessary, he was prepared to lay down his life. He was ever at the bedside of the sick and dying, and even sold his bed for their benefit.

St. Charles spent the greater part of his time in the chapel called "the Sepulchre." There he died, as it were, with his Savior, by completely renouncing self, and there he earnestly prayed that everything earthly in him might be destroyed by the death of the Son of God.

Having been stricken with a deadly fever on All Saints' Day, he caused himself to be carried in a litter to Milan. He received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction with great devotion, and expired in the first part of the night between the third and fourth of November. His last words were: "Behold, I come!"

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants." (*St. Matthew* xviii, 23.)

In this as in all other parables, the king is a figure of God, master and judge of the universe; and the debtor represents sinful man, who must render an account of all his actions to the Divine Judge.

Jesus represents the servant as being heavily in debt in order to signify the enormity of sin and the immense debt contracted by him who commits it.

It seems strange that the debtor's wife and children are also punished. It may well signify that sometimes a whole family, nay an entire community, must suffer for the sin of a father or of a member. All who were in the ship with the Prophet Jonas were in danger of drowning because he had been disobedient to God. All Egypt was punished on account of Pharao, and three thousand conquerors of Jericho were put to flight near the city of Hai by a handful of uncircumcised men, on account of one man, Achan.

Strictly speaking, it was impossible for the servant to pay such an enormous debt; but this

was to signify that a sinner, although he cannot do anything of himself, can at least promise to satisfy the Divine Justice, relying on the infinite treasure of the passion and the merits of Christ. God shows how, in His goodness, He is willing to forgive the sinner who sincerely confesses his sins and firmly resolves to amend his life. David and Magdalen are eloquent examples of this truth.

The wicked and hard-hearted fellow-servant is a figure of those Christians who refuse to forgive their neighbor, while they themselves hope to obtain forgiveness of their own, far more grievous sins.

Those who informed their master of the bad conduct of this man, prefigure the true servants of the Lord, who are always displeased and sorry for the acts of revenge done by Christians. Although satisfaction might appear just, the heavenly Master always condemns a revengeful spirit, and will judge it rigorously.

Let us learn, too, how angry the Lord will be with us if we exact satisfaction, knowing as we do, that He has strictly commanded us to forgive our neighbor. He has repeatedly assured us that we shall be treated by Him in the same manner as we have treated others.

Another very salutary lesson contained in this Gospel is that we must acknowledge our great debts, that is, our sins before God, with sincerity

and deep humility and have a firm purpose of making good our short comings as far as we can with the assistance of divine grace, by repentance, receiving the Sacraments, and performing other good works. Besides, we are to learn to pardon those who have offended us and to fear the punishments with which God has threatened vindictive men. Whosoever does not sincerely forgive his enemies, will be sentenced to the torments of hell.

Beware of careless reading. Do not read a book unless it is given to you by those who are older and more experienced than you are. While there is no harm in good stories, even when full of action and spirit, yet if one reads such tales to the exclusion of serious books, one is apt to become disgusted with real life. When the mind is fed on such reading, it easily passes to something worse. Not always is the damage done by such reading repaired and atoned for in afterlife, as was the case with St. Teresa. A foolish love for romances temporarily cooled her piety, and it was only twelve years later that she became a Carmelite nun.

Teresa's father and mother were pious people, who carefully watched over their charges, and

delighting in reading good books, with which they were well supplied. Thus Teresa early acquired a taste for study.

As a child she read the legends of the Saints. The example of the martyrs filled her with a glowing desire to die for Christ. She and her brother secretly left their home to go to Africa. But just outside the city they met an uncle, who brought the would-be martyrs of the faith back to their anxious parents. When Teresa was twelve years old, her mother died. Her grief was great. One day she knelt down before a picture of the Blessed Virgin and prayed: "O Mother of mercy, I now choose thee to be my mother; receive me, a poor orphan, among thy children."

You know what one must do to be a "child of Mary." Teresa forgot for a while. Besides reading romances, she went out with a gay cousin. The result was that she neglected her prayers, spent much time and money on clothes and finery, became vain and frivolous; in fact, was filled with the spirit of the world. Fortunately, she preserved her purity, as her most priceless treasure.

When Teresa's father saw the change in his daughter, he placed her in a convent, where many young ladies were educated. The removal of temptations, the society of the pious Sisters, the renewed reading of devout books soon brought

about the desired effect. Teresa's naturally pious inclination was reawakened, but it required a long illness, a stay with a saintly uncle, and the reading of the letters of St. Jerome to turn her mind entirely away from earthly things and move her to embrace the religious life. No sooner had she put on the habit of a Carmelite nun than an unspeakable peace filled her soul.

God sent His handmaid many trials, both of mind and body. Scarcely a day passed for her without suffering. To these she added many voluntary works of penance. Once the place in hell, into which she might have been plunged by her indifference, was revealed to her in a vision. Her hair rose up in horror at the sight, and her eagerness to serve God and induce others to do likewise was redoubled. Teresa's soul was transfigured by the purest love of God.

Teresa was not permitted to die by the sword, as she had desired from her earliest childhood, or through any other means by which the crown of martyrdom is gained, but during her long life of nearly seventy years she endured many martyrdoms. Suffering, sickness, persecution, opposition were showered upon her thick and fast.

On a journey to Alba the Saint passed away, consumed by the desire to meet her heavenly Bridegroom. Many years after her death her body was found uncorrupt and as fresh and nat-

ural in color as on the day she died. Many miracles have been wrought through her intercession.

In the calendar of the Church her feast falls on the fifteenth day of October.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"The Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in His speech." (*St. Matthew* xxii, 15.)

THE Pharisees and Herodians approached Jesus with the perfidious design of catching Him in His words, and of finding in His reply to their question an excuse for condemning Him and making Him odious to one or the other of the opposing parties.

The question was this: Is it lawful (for the Jews) to pay tribute to Cæsar? The majority submitted most unwillingly to the law imposing the tribute. Furthermore, following the teachings of the Herodians, they were of the opinion that it was not lawful for the Hebrew nation to pay tribute to the Gentiles, and hence to pay the tribute was a sin.

Had Jesus declared it lawful to pay tribute to the Romans, He would have made Himself odious to the Jews, and most odious to the Herodians. If, on the contrary, He had declared it unlawful to pay the tribute, He would have provoked the anger and invited the vengeance of Cæsar, and the enmity and persecution of Herod, a partisan of the Emperor.

The praise the opposing parties bestowed on

Jesus was truly His due. He merited it in the strictest and highest sense of the term. But on the part of these perfidious hypocrites it was a stroke of the most refined malice and an insidious trap. They hoped, by blinding Him with flattery, to lead Him to give a rash decision that would offend the one or the other party.

The reproof which our Divine Saviour gave them arose not from anger or revenge, but was rather an act of charity, because it showed Him to be a scrutinizer of men's minds, and gave the Pharisees an occasion to learn, repent, and save their souls.

There was a divine prudence in the reply of Christ; for, without offending either the one party or the other, He taught that obedience is due to those in authority, and enlightened the consciences of the Jews by calming the opposition of the one and the scruples of the other.

He also taught us to obey our superiors in all things and to render to God as a tribute that soul which is marked with His image and with the indelible character of the holy Sacraments.

What are we to learn from this Gospel? We are taught in the first place not to try to deceive our neighbor by feigned praise or flattery. We are also admonished not to put our trust in human praise. Besides, we are told not to give our opinion too rashly, not to offend others and enforce our own opinion; and finally, we are counselled to

show ourselves obedient subjects of authority and sincere worshippers of God.

Christ keeps a record of what we give to the poor and gives it back to us with manifold interest. And thus the soldier who is merciful to the wounded or imprisoned enemy, has a chance to lay up treasures in Heaven. St. Martin of Tours, the Patron Saint of soldiers, had a very kind heart. He was never happier than when waiting on the sick or assisting the poor. When his wounded comrades were brought into camp after a battle, he devoted himself to their care and spent nearly all his pay in supplying them with comforts which they could not otherwise have obtained.

The Christian soldier should learn pity and mercy for the poor from St. Martin. When he gave half of his cloak to the beggar on a cold winter day, he did it for the sake of Christ, and therefore Christ received him into Heaven.

The Church celebrates the feast of St. Martin, Bishop and Confessor, on November the eleventh. He was a native of Hungary. His parents were pagans, but Martin from his infancy was fond of the society of Christians. He had Christan playmates, with whom he wandered into the house of God. The child was very clever; he observed ev-

erything that went on around him, and very soon came to see how differently the Christians conducted themselves than the pagans.

Martin was born with a soul that thirsted for virtue. As a boy he often slipped away from home unnoticed, and went into the Christian churches to listen to sermons. Soon he wished to become a Christian, and, without telling his parents, asked to be admitted among those who were preparing for Baptism.

Before he received Baptism, when only fifteen years old, he had become a mounted soldier, in obedience to the command of the emperor. His troop was sent to France, and Martin had to go along. Here he was made an officer.

The life of a soldier was and is full of dangers, not only to the body, but also to the soul. But Martin, though surrounded by pagan soldiers, remained good and pure. He was never known to swear, to lie, or to speak of impure things. He avoided gambling and drinking. Prayer and the reading of good books were his recreation, and his pleasure was kindness and mercy towards the poor.

Once, in midwinter, he met a beggar who was half naked and begged for alms for the sake of Christ. Martin had no money with him, but rather than send the beggar away, he cut his cloak in two with his sword and gave half to the beggar. The remaining half of the garment he drew

around his shoulders and passed through the gate of the city amid the jeers of those of his comrades who thought him a fool for his charity, and the silence of others, more humane, who felt themselves rebuked for their selfishness.

In that same night Martin had a dream. Jesus came and stood before him, wearing on His shoulders that part of the cloak which Martin had given to the beggar. He seemed to smile upon the young trooper and to say to the angels who surrounded Him: "Martin, who is only a beginner in the faith, gave Me this garment."

You understand that in this way the Saviour wanted to show Martin His approval. If he were a Christian, he could do a great deal more, and that what one does to the least of His brethren, for the love of Him, does for Him.

After Martin had been baptized, he became a priest and later bishop of Tours. He built a great monastery, where with eighty companions he lived a simple and holy life. He never seemed to grow old, nor to require rest. He fasted and prayed like a young man in the first fervor of devotion. He traveled from place to place, baptizing and instructing wherever he went. But at last his strength failed and he fell ill. He was ready to go, for his work was done. He died as he had lived, a Saint of God. On account of the incident of the cloak, Saint Martin has been named the Patron Saint of Beggars.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"As Jesus was speaking those things unto them, behold a certain ruler came up, and adored Him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come lay Thy hands upon her, and she shall live." (*St. Matthew* ix, 18.)

In reading the account of this same event in the other Gospels it appears that, when this man, whom Luke calls Jairus, and who was a leader in the provincial synagogue, left home, his daughter was dying, and that as he was returning with Jesus to Capharnaum, messengers brought him the sad news of her death; so that when our Lord arrived at the house, the maiden had ceased to live.

The infirm woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment was a figure of the Gentiles, who were spiritually infirm for a long time, without any of their philosophy being able to lead them to salvation. They were impure by their superstitions and wandering in the way of perdition, but by their approach to Jesus Christ and by recognizing Him as true God and man were cured and introduced to the spiritual life before the Hebrews.

The dead girl symbolizes the Hebrew people.

They had the Messias in their midst, but, blinded by evil passions, not only refused to recognize Him, but hated and persecuted Him to death. They were dying before God and about to be rejected by Him.

Christ compared death to sleep, indicating that the girl would awake and return to the duties of life. Before the end of the world the Hebrews will awake from their stupor and incredulity, adore Christ crucified, enter into the Church, and be members of the one fold under the one Shepherd. We may say, then, in reference to the Hebrews, as Christ said of the daughter of Jairus: The child is not dead, but sleepeth.

When the sick woman touched the garment of Christ, she was cured. As the mystic garment of the Incarnate Word is His sacred Humanity, we can see how great is the efficacy of the Most Holy Sacrament in curing a sinner of his spiritual maladies; also all those grown old in sin, if they but put themselves in the way of penance and seek the proper remedy in this Sacrament.

Christ commanded the woman to make her infirmity known, in order that sinners should learn to confess their spiritual infirmities with sincerity and courage to the priests, the dispensers of His grace, in order to obtain mercy, pardon, and a perfect cure.

According to St. Mark, this miracle was wit-

nessed only by the immediate relatives of the maiden and the three Apostles: Peter, James, and John, the crowd having been sent away.

The Gospels record only three cases where dead persons were raised to life by our Lord, namely: this twelve-year old girl, the son of the widow of Naim, and Lazarus of Bethania, the brother of Martha and Mary. The dead girl represents a soul fallen into grievous sin through frailty rather than malice; the son of the widow signifies a habitual sinner borne to perdition by his vices, to resuscitate whom a very great grace is necessary; and Lazarus represents a sinner grown old in iniquity and corrupted by his evil passions, whose conversion requires a veritable miracle of grace.

In to-day's Gospel Jesus instructs us to have recourse to Him in all our needs with a lively faith and a humility such as that shown by the ruler and the infirm woman. We should also admire the goodness of our Divine Redeemer, who was so prompt to console those who appealed to Him. He will do the same for us if we ask Him from our hearts. In the face of death, men should seek help for the soul and eschew the vain pomp of the world. That is why the Master sent away the musicians from the bedside of the dead girl.

Devotion to the Blessed Mother of God is a sure protection of faith in her Divine Son. Every time we invoke her, we renew our faith in the Incarnate God; reverse the sin and unbelief of our First Parents; and take our part with her who was blessed because she believed. "The chain of Eve's disobedience was broken by the obedience of Mary. That which Eve bound by her unbelief, Mary set free by her faith. Mary became the advocate of Eve."

The parents of St. Gregory the wonder-worker, a native of Cesarea, were pagans. As a boy he began to study the rudiments of the Christian faith. Always virtuous and prayerful, he was blessed by God in a singular manner. His humility filled him with fear, and he retired from the world to learn more accurately the mysteries of the faith. As he lay awake one night, an old man entered his room and pointed to a lady of superhuman beauty and radiant with heavenly light. The old man was St. John the Evangelist, and the beautiful Lady, Mary, the Mother of the Lord. In consequence of this vision Gregory consecrated for the rest of his life to the service

of God, under the protection of Mary. Animated with zeal for souls, he received from the Almighty an extraordinary power of working miracles.

One day, as he was going out of the city on an errand of charity, it began to rain so hard that he had to stop and look for shelter. There was no building near, except a famous heathen temple, in which the devils had great honor paid to them and repaid their clients by answering questions and pretending to foretell the future,—which, as we all know, the devil, clever though he is, cannot do. But he makes a very good guess sometimes. Before St. Gregory entered this temple, he made the Sign of the Cross several times over the building. Then he went in and settled down for the night with his companions. Perhaps you think that meant finding as warm a spot as possible and going to sleep. But St. Gregory and those with him passed the night in prayer. In the morning the little band continued their journey. When, at the appointed time, the pagan priests began their ceremonies as usual, sacrificed and prayed, no answer came. On being urged, the devils acknowledged that they had been driven out by a man who had spent the night in the temple. The chief priest, in a fury, set out to find St. Gregory. When he had overtaken him, he violently abused him for interfering with his worship, and threatened to denounce him to the magistrates unless he repaired the mischief he

had done. St. Gregory remained perfectly calm and told him that he had power to drive away the devil, and power to bring him back. The pagan was amazed and asked him to give him a proof of this power. St. Gregory took a slip of paper and wrote upon it: "Satan, enter." The paper was laid upon the altar, and, behold, Satan returned, and gave his false answers as before. The priest, surprised at what he saw, begged the holy Bishop to give him some account of the great God whom his gods so readily obeyed. St. Gregory performed a miracle in his sight by moving a large rock to another place, after having invoked the power of God. The priest was converted by this miracle and, forsaking his house, friends, and relations, became a fervent disciple of the Saint.

St. Gregory showed what a powerful weapon we all have at our command to expel the devil. Satan flies when you make the Sign of the Cross made by your hands, just as he fled at the same sign made by St. Gregory. The devil will not leave us alone, unless we drive him away. So when temptation comes, let us bravely make the Sign of the Cross, and Satan will flee.

When St. Gregory entered his diocese there were but seventeen Christians in it; when he died, but seventeen pagans. He built the first Christian church of which we have certain record. It survived the persecution of Diocletian, who ordered that all Christian churches should be razed

to the ground. It stood unshaken in an earthquake which destroyed the city. It was a splendid symbol of that faith which Gregory received from the Virgin Mother of God.

His feast is kept on November the eighteenth.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"For there shall be then great tribulation, such as had not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be." (*St. Matthew* xxiv, 21.)

CHRIST had two things in view in this discourse. One was to advise his followers among the Jews to escape the tribulations that were to come over Jerusalem, and the other, to warn those Christians who will be alive at the end of the world to be prepared for the great desolation that will precede His second coming, when He judges the living and the dead.

The abomination foretold by Daniel referred to the strife, the murders, sacrileges, and all kinds of crimes committed by the different Jewish factions, not only in the streets and squares of the holy city, but in the very Temple itself. The crimes committed by them in the days preceding the fall of Jerusalem are so horrible that they may truly be called an abomination of desolation.

In Christ's prophecy the Christian can picture that abomination, caused by all sorts of crimes, which, like a mighty torrent, will overflow the earth in the days of Antichrist, at the end of the world.

The counsel which Christ gave to the Jews,

namely, to flee as soon as possible, also applies to the Christians who will live at the end of the world. They are advised to escape the general corruption that will reign supreme, even at the cost of what is most dear to them on earth, preferring to lose all temporal possessions rather than their souls and the imperishable goods of Heaven.

He whose heart is controlled by evil passions, which cause him to commit all kinds of sin, who cherishes carnal affections and is unduly attached to the things of this world, cannot walk as he ought in the way of salvation. On this account Christ said: Woe to those who will not be able to escape the torrent of iniquity that will overflow the earth, especially in the days of Antichrist. In telling them to pray that their flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath, He advised the sinners not to delay their conversion to old age, much less to defer penance until their last sickness or their last day of life, lest they risk dying impenitently for want of time or strength, and thus be eternally damned.

The false prophets are the teachers of false doctrines, of heresies and bad morals, who endeavor to distort the truths of the Gospel and exert their whole strength in the days of Antichrist, at the end of the world.

Considering how minutely all His predictions in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled, we know that Christ spoke the truth

when He said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Let us learn to fear the dreadful punishments of the divine anger, do penance for our sins, avoid the occasions of sin, and prepare ourselves for the Day of Judgment, of which the Gospel speaks so impressively on the last Sunday after Pentecost.

Great temporal and spiritual blessings, especially the grace of obtaining eternal life, are promised to those who give out of Christian charity, that is out of love of Christ, and particularly those who perform the so-called temporal acts of mercy. Who gives to the poor will experience no want, but he who despises the petitions of the needy, will himself suffer poverty. St. Paul entreats us not to forget to practice charity, for by such practice God is reconciled. The pennies which you receive for candy should occasionally be saved for charity. Also, you can wait on the sick or give a drink to some thirsty and tired person. Even a cup of water given in the name of Jesus is sure of a reward.

A young and delicate princess, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, made herself the servant and nurse of the poor. Let her example teach us to disregard the opinions of the world and to overcome our

natural repugnance, in order to serve Jesus Christ in the persons of His poor.

Elizabeth loved God better than anything in the world and used to steal away from her amusements to pray in a quiet corner in church. Every day she practiced some act of mortification. When she won a game, she would stop and say: "While I am having such good luck I will stop for the love of God."

Others of the royal household did not like her piety, and made fun of Elizabeth. One day Elizabeth took off her diadem while she knelt before the Blessed Sacrament. Upon being asked the reason, she said she could not bear to wear jewels when she thought of the crown of thorns which Our Lord had worn. But her young companion, Agnes, sneered and told her she was fit for the cloister rather than the throne.

Elizabeth took particular delight in temporal and spiritual works of mercy. She always gave her pin-money to the poor, with the hope that they would say a Hail Mary for her. She gathered up the food left over from the table and gave it to the hungry.

Her husband admired her for her virtues, particularly for her love of the poor. You have all heard the story of the roses. One day the dear Saint was coming down a steep path. Her apron bulged with meat, eggs, and fruit for the poor. Her husband, coming home from the chase, met

her and wondered what she was carrying. He asked her to let him see what she had. She drew aside the mantle and laughingly replied: "Roses, my lord." The Landgrave looked in astonishment. Roses they were,—fresh, blooming, beautiful roses. He took one and kept it to the end of his life. This story of the "roses" has been handed down to us through centuries.

After the death of her husband came many troubles. Because she loved to serve the poor, the ladies of the court called Elizabeth servant and not a princess. Even the nobility made fun of her. She was like a lamb among wolves. She visited the sick, helped the needy, and spun and wove clothing for the poor with her own hands. Finally, the young Landgrave's relations turned her out. She had no shelter and wandered about with her children until a pious woman received her into her home. She had learned to love adversities because they made her like unto Our Lord Himself.

When the midnight bell of the Franciscan monastery called the brothers to matins, Elizabeth went to church and asked the brothers to sing the Te Deum in thanksgiving for having found shelter in a stable, even as Mary had in Bethlehem.

On the nineteenth of November, her pure soul, decorated with many merits and virtues, passed back to its Maker. She was buried in Marburg, where a beautiful church was built in her honor.